

Braille Monitor



MAY, 1974

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

A Publication of the
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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* * *

If you or a friend wishes to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation, the sum of \$____ (or, "____ percent of my net estate", or "the following stocks and bonds: ____") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons."

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

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FLASH—OKLAHOMA AFFILIATE

As *The Monitor* goes to press, we are able to report that we have a new affiliate in Oklahoma. Details will have to wait until the national Convention this summer, but at least the broad outline should be given now. The organizing team (led by Ralph Sanders) began arriving in Oklahoma March 8, and the affiliate came into being in Oklahoma City Saturday, March 16.

Many of us had suspected that things were bad in Oklahoma, but it was worse than we had thought. Members of the organizing team received threats and anonymous phone calls. They were followed in cars. Blind person after blind person told of agency threats and warnings—many of them coming from the ACB-controlled sheltered workshop, the Oklahoma League for the Blind. It was clear that somebody was anxious (most anxious) to keep the National Federation of the Blind out of Oklahoma.

But their efforts failed. Oklahoma is no longer the exclusive territory of the ACB and the agencies. It now also hears the voice of the independent blind. There is now a vehicle for self-expression, a means of common action; and the organization is the blind speaking for themselves—not under agency-ACB control and domination.

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Oklahoma are a sturdy lot. They will need to be, for they will undoubtedly receive threats and pressures

of unusual intensity. Such is already the case.

However, the affiliate will not be small or merely cling to a precarious existence. It gives every sign of being one of our strongest. The Oklahoma situation is so bad and the repression of the blind is so repugnant that the growth of the NFB of Oklahoma is likely to be explosive. Once it is clear that the blind can organize and not be ground under for doing it, new members will come in a growing flood.

Our new Oklahoma president is Ethel Susong of 25½ Northeast Sixty-third Street, Oklahoma City. She will be a worthy leader for an affiliate which will inevitably be on the cutting edge of progress and in the thick of the fight to improve the lives of the blind. The other officers are: first vice-president, Cordelia Allen, Oklahoma City; second vice-president, Allie Robertson, Oklahoma City; secretary, Cindy Van, Oklahoma City; treasurer, Odel Mobley [Mr.]; board members are: Shirley Guerra, Muskogee; Dr. James Bissland, Tulsa; Gus Burg, Oklahoma City. Ethel Susong will be the delegate to the national Convention and Cindy Van will serve as alternate.

Full details of the Oklahoma organizing will be given at the Convention this summer, and the story will make interesting listening. In the meantime: Welcome, Oklahoma! □

ON THE SCHOLLS OF NAC

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, March 11, 1974.

Dr. GERALDINE SCHOLL,
*Chairman, Commission on Standards,
National Accreditation Council
for Agencies Serving the Blind
and Visually Handicapped,
New York, New York.*

DEAR DR. SCHOLL: Under date of December 12, 1973, you wrote to me asking that the National Federation of the Blind "participate" in an upcoming review of the NAC standards on physical facilities. Specifically, you asked that we do two things: (1) that we suggest persons to be included on a roster of resource people to review the standards and (2) that we study the standards, along with a set of guidelines that you would send, and that we then make suggestions. Your letter was very clear in its indication that both of these steps would be involved in our review of your standards.

The fact that I understood this to be the case is shown by the language of my reply dated January 3, 1974. I said in part:

Rather than "identify from three to five persons who are aware of standards and accreditation" and then have you select one or more of them as participants, we would prefer to select our own representatives. We will be happy to have them present at any reasonable time and place you designate to meet with you. We shall also be happy to review your proposed guidelines for updating standards.

My letter of January 3 also dealt with other matters. Your letter of December 12 had

made a number of statements which seemed at variance with the facts. Accordingly, your request that I reply by checking a box on a postcard seemed inappropriate. I explained this and then went on to remind you that the organized blind had repeatedly asked NAC to meet with us to discuss common problems and basic differences. My exact words were:

We believe that the place to begin to reform NAC is not at the level of considering this or that particular standard. The problem is more basic and far-reaching than that.

In other words in the framework of this broad perspective I indicated to you that the Federation would be willing to examine your guidelines and review your standards. I did not indicate that we would be willing to do this in a vacuum or in the absence of a reasonable response from NAC concerning the other items I had mentioned.

Just as I was sending you my January 3 letter, I received a second communication from you (it was merely dated "January, 1974") asking that the Federation review the NAC standards on vocational services. This letter was virtually a replay of your December 12 communication and seemed to require nothing more than a reiteration of what I had told you on January 3.

Then I received your letter dated January 15, 1974. It ignored the various points raised in my letter of January 3. It made no mention of any Federation representatives who would be invited to meet as part of a group to discuss NAC standards or of any conference between Federation leaders and members of the NAC Board or of any other

substantive item concerning real reform of NAC. Instead it blandly stated that you were "pleased that the National Federation of the Blind" had agreed to assist in the review of the NAC standards. Of course, under the circumstances and in the context of your letter we had made no such agreement at all. Nevertheless, I decided to avoid anything which could even remotely appear to resemble hasty action.

In the meantime under date of January 16, 1974, I wrote to Mr. Daniel Robinson, president of NAC, to ask once again that a meeting be held between NAC leaders and the Federation to discuss differences. I reminded Mr. Robinson that he had not answered my last letter and that occurrences at NAC's December board meeting were not calculated to bring harmony. As you may know, Mr. Robinson did not respond to my January 16 letter.

Under date of February 13, 1974, I wrote again to Mr. Robinson. Once more I urged that NAC leaders meet with representatives of the blind to discuss reform of NAC. I had hoped that persistence on the part of the Federation would lead to a cooling of tempers on the part of NAC leaders and a positive response. However, under date of February 22, 1974, I received the following rather terse letter from Mr. Robinson:

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: Thank you for your letter of February 13, 1974.

This is to let you know that your request for a meeting is being given serious consideration. Your letter is being shared with the members of the Executive Committee of NAC. As soon as I receive the benefit of their views I will communicate with you further.

Sincerely yours,

DANIEL D. ROBINSON.

Though more civil and restrained than some of Mr. Robinson's earlier communications, the letter still contains, it seems to me, a tone of condescension totally inappropriate in the circumstances. Although we are now in mid-March, I have heard nothing more from Mr. Robinson. If NAC can ever be brought to see itself in a realistic light—that is, if it can ever relinquish its lofty and patronizing attitude toward the blind—progress in resolving differences may be possible. In this connection I call your attention to the statement in the second paragraph of the guidelines which you sent me for reviewing standards which reads:

The Commission on Standards has defined NAC standards as follows:

The dictionary defines "standard" as "That which is established by authority as a fixed rule of measure."

I think this is an accurate portrayal of NAC's self-image, and I think continued conflict is inevitable until and unless that self-image can be altered.

Under date of February 20, 1974, you sent me a mass-produced (it appears to be mimeographed) letter containing further revelations. I pass over without comment such items as your statement that you appreciate the time and personnel we have employed to "help insure that these standards remain timely and relevant to the needs of users of services." As I pointed out in my January 3 letter, a thing cannot "remain" what it is not now and never has been. Of more significance are your comments that our written review of your standards will be given to technical committees for evaluation and that these technical committees will then prepare comprehensive recommendations,

presumably to be presented to the NAC Board.

In other words the organized blind are apparently not going to be permitted to meet with the NAC Board to discuss matters relating either to NAC's procedure or the content of NAC's standards. Instead, we will be allowed to submit (pursuant to NAC guidelines) written reviews dealing with the details and minutia of certain segments of the NAC standards. Even then, we will not be dealing with the NAC Board itself. Our reviews (along with the comments of many others) will be given to a so-called "technical committee," which will evaluate the material it receives and make recommendations to the NAC Board.

This, of course, is precisely the procedure which NAC's predecessor COMSTAC followed in the mid-1960's with such unproductive and disastrous results. It did not work then, and it will not work now.

Dr. Scholl, procedure is a substantive and indispensable element of democracy. If, for instance, you could demonstrate that the edicts of a benevolent and wise tyrant were both effective and kindly meant, the free citizen would still find them intolerable. Democracy means self-government. It means the right of the governed to have something to say about what is done to them and for them. If it does not mean this, then it means nothing.

This is why NAC's approach has not worked. This is also why Mr. Robinson was wrong in the statements he made in his interview with *Dialogue* magazine in Chicago last summer. He said that a homeowner in a city must abide by the building codes of that city but that he could have no voice in determining these

building codes because they were fixed by "professionals"—people with knowledge about electricity and plumbing and structural matters. He failed, however, to take into account the fact that the homeowner can vote. The technical experts do not have the final authority to enact the building codes. This is reserved to the city councils and mayors and other elected representatives of the people. If a particular building code is oppressive or detrimental (either in its requirements or its application), the homeowner has redress. He can elect a new set of city officials—and he often does. In turn, those new officials can change the building code and remove the people who wrote it.

But NAC operates under no such restraints. It has set itself up to make standards with infinitely more sweeping impact upon our lives than the provisions of a city building code. Yet, we are not even permitted to have a conference with NAC leaders, not to say anything at all of voting as to whether they should continue in office. In fact, when we ask for such meetings, NAC responds by vilifying us and denying the representative character of our movement.

Under the circumstances, Dr. Scholl, we cannot in good conscience submit a written review of your standards on physical facilities and vocational services. I hope you will read what I have written thoughtfully and without rancor. If NAC cannot or will not meet with us and consider our views in good faith—if it cannot understand (or even try to understand) what we are saying—then we have no alternative. We will continue to fight. In such a contest you have (as you have demonstrated) many advantages. You have influence and money and access to the

wellsprings of power, and you also have tradition and man's fear of blindness; but these will not be enough. You cannot wear us down, and you cannot silence us. Our cause is as strong as the urge of people to be free. Regardless of what you think, we bear no ill will toward NAC or its members. All we ask of NAC is that it respect us as human beings and treat us accordingly, that it recognize our right to have a voice in determining our own destiny.

I urge you not to dismiss what I have said as mere rhetoric. Too much is at stake. Please think about it and discuss it with the others on the NAC Board, and then please give me an affirmative response. If NAC truly wants to improve the lot of the blind, then it will take a long look at what it is doing, and it will meet with us to consider meaningful reform—and it will not merely meet as a gesture, but in good faith, and with a modicum of humility.

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President,
National Federation of the Blind.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,
New York, New York, March 18, 1974.

Dr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President, National Federation of the Blind,
Des Moines, Iowa.

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: Your letter of March 11, 1974, has been received in which you have made participation by the National Federation of the Blind in the review of standards, conducted by the

Commission on Standards, conditional upon the successful resolution of your grievances with the Board of Directors of the National Accreditation Council.

As you have requested, I shall share your views with my associates on the NAC Board. Additionally, your position will be brought to the attention of the Commission on Standards, which developed the procedures for the national effort to update and revise standards for the field of services to blind and visually handicapped people. When I have presented your position and obtained reaction from the board and the commission concerning your proposal for a substantial alteration in procedure, I will be in touch with you.

Speaking personally, I regret that you have felt it necessary to take this action, and hope that you will reconsider it. The Commission on Standards has been most anxious to receive input from organizations of blind persons in the process of reviewing the standards.

Sincerely yours,

GERALDINE T. SCHOLL, Ph.D.,
Chairman, Commission on Standards.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, March 21, 1974.

Dr. GERALDINE T. SCHOLL, Ph.D.,
Chairman, Commission on Standards,
National Accreditation Council
for Agencies Serving the Blind
and Visually Handicapped,
New York, New York.

DEAR DR. SCHOLL: In your letter of March 18, 1974, you say:

Your letter of March 11, 1974, has been received in which you have made

participation by the National Federation of the Blind in the review of standards, conducted by the Commission on Standards, conditional upon the successful resolution of your grievances with the Board of Directors of the National Accreditation Council.

Dr. Scholl, this is not what I said in my letter of March 11. Further, I made no "proposal for a substantial alteration in procedure." Finally, I note with interest your statement that: "The Commission on Standards has been most anxious to receive input from organizations of blind persons in the process of reviewing the standards." Dr. Scholl, how many national

"organizations of blind persons" do you really think there are?

As I have observed before, communication with NAC officials is difficult. Regardless of effort, confusion of meaning seems to be the rule. Even this letter may be a case in point.

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President,
National Federation of the Blind.

□

MARC MAURER, RECORDING FOR THE BLIND, AND DR. BLEECKER

STATEMENT BEFORE RFB BOARD OF DIRECTORS *February 12, 1974*

BY

MARC MAURER

Editor's Note.—Marc Maurer is president of both the Indiana Council of the Blind and the NFB Student Division.

I am honored to be here and speak with you. The National Federation of the Blind Student Division has been overwhelmingly pleased with the work of Recording for the Blind, and I would like to tell you how well the work of RFB is done. Thousands of blind students each year use your services; they are first-rate. Your own record will tell you better than I can what a fine job you are doing.

There is, however, one matter which the organized blind students of the National Federation of the Blind feel obliged to discuss with you. It is your accreditation by the National Accreditation Council for

Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

Blind people have leveled serious charges against NAC which have not been answered. We have asked, requested, cajoled, and finally demanded responses to the simplest questions. No answers have been given. As the questions became more direct, NAC became more evasive, and as the blind became more insistent, NAC became less responsive. A time came when NAC tried to ignore us all together. When congressional interest finally forced a response from NAC, its officials were impudent and arrogant.

I believe that Recording for the Blind is not an agency like NAC. I believe that you are sincerely trying to work in the best

interests of the blind. NAC is not in the best interests of the blind, and I shall show you that NAC is not in your best interests.

Our complaints against NAC are simple. So simple, that NAC has been either unable or unwilling to understand them. They are firstly, that NAC is undemocratically structured and operates undemocratically, and secondly, that in operating undemocratically NAC arbitrarily imposes standards on the blind people of this country which have either nothing to do with the real problems faced by blind people, or hinder us in our attempts to solve those problems. It should be emphasized that we are not opposed to the idea of accreditation. On the contrary, we support it. What we do object to is NAC's operation in the name of accreditation. What we are saying is that blind people have a right to help make the policies that shape our lives. We have as much right to participate in the policy-making decisions which affect us as United States citizens have to participate in the Government of the United States. Almost any citizen may vote and run for office in our country, thus participating in the Government which governs him. In NAC, however, almost no citizen can vote or run for office. NAC itself claims to be a vital and necessary force in the field of work with the blind. NAC's own declaration makes of this organization a government for programs for the blind. A government without the consent of the governed is tyranny.

There are, of course, counterclaims and circumlocutions to proclaim NAC as a more progressive agency than I would indicate. For example, NAC has stated that its accreditation process is voluntary, and it has adopted a general policy of openness. The accreditation process might be

voluntary, but the National Industries for the Blind has agreed that either sheltered workshops will be accredited by NAC, or they won't receive Government contracts. And beyond that, a statement by NAC has appeared in the press saying that by 1980 all Federal funding to programing for the blind will be conditioned on NAC accreditation. There is a story about a medieval English court of justice. The prisoners in this court were bound hand and foot and thrown into deep water. If the prisoner sank and drowned, the court knew he was innocent. But, if the prisoner floated this was a sign of guilt. The prisoner must be fished out of the water and executed. NAC's system of voluntary accreditation seems strikingly similar to this medieval English court of justice.

NAC's openness, too, is an interesting phenomenon and deserves comment. The general policy of openness has been adopted not once, but many times. While this openness is a firm and fixed policy of the NAC Board, observers from the NFB, the largest organization of blind people in the world, were to be rigidly kept out of the NAC Board meetings. But we were not kept out. We went to Congress and asked for the help of our Government in gaining admittance.

In December of last year the years of conflict between NAC and NFB apparently made a slight impression on NAC. A new policy has been established to invite small numbers of observers from organizations of the blind to sit in the board meetings. However, this does not represent a new and more justifiable stance on the part of NAC. While we are now invited to have representatives at the NAC meeting, we are still rigidly excluded from the executive committee meetings of NAC. Also, the

minutes and important decisions of NAC are now mailed to each board member and executive committee member. The vote is taken on these decisions without having them discussed at the NAC Board meetings, and the minutes of the executive committee meetings are handled in the same way. In other words the observers at the NAC Board meetings will now know less about the actual operations and decisions of NAC than they once did.

NAC, as you know, invites all who care to come to attend its annual meeting. I could probably get an invitation, and you could certainly get one. But no policy-making decisions are made at those meetings. The NAC Board meeting, an entirely separate meeting from the annual meeting, is not open to all. I should like to point out to you that while NFB representatives were not allowed to attend and participate in the NAC Board meetings, RFB representatives were not either. Since RFB is accredited by NAC the annual meeting was open to you, but the board meeting was not.

The present NAC Board meeting, like the annual meetings of NAC before December, are now open to whoever wishes to make sufficient fuss to get in. However, those board meetings are now degenerating into meaningless gatherings held to pacify the dissatisfied outcasts. The Romans are reputed to have given dinners to the mob, and then to have sent the mob to the circus. NAC gives our representatives a dinner, and then holds its board meeting, after which it goes off into secret executive committee session to make the decisions of policy which will shape the lives of blind people. I can't go into those meetings of the executive committee, and neither can you. Apparently, the general policy of

openness adopted by NAC means that you and I have the opportunity to write to NAC any time we desire. NAC will decide when or if responses to our letters are in order.

Why should the NFB Student Division want you to know all of this? It is because NAC is using the good reputation of Recording for the Blind to give its own malevolent machinations validity. RFB is respected by the blind, highly respected. Your executive director spoke to the NFB Student Division meeting in 1971, and again in 1973. He did not tell us that everything we wanted could be done immediately, but he did tell us what RFB could and would do. He responded reasonably and directly to our questions.

Characteristic of Mr. Staley's willingness on behalf of RFB to answer our questions and solicit our comments is his performance on both of the occasions when he spoke to us. Mr. Staley came onto our platform and gave a very short speech. His words were packed with information, and he outlined for us some of the future plans of Recording for the Blind. Then your executive director opened the meeting to questions, suggestions, and comments from the floor. The question-and-answer periods were long, and the questioning got fairly detailed. Mr. Staley gave us what information he could, and took our suggestions when he thought they were good ones. When he thought they were not good ones, he told us why. If Mr. Staley lacked sufficient knowledge to give a cogent answer to a particular question he admitted it. Throughout it was clear that Recording for the Blind, through its executive director, was trying to listen and respond to the blind people it serves. We are gratified by that spirit.

In addition to its involvement in the Student Division meetings RFB sends questionnaires to its readers which ask that deficiencies in particular books be pointed out, and that if there are other comments they be sent to RFB. Finally, Mr. Staley has invited me here today to talk with you about the hottest, most controversial subject in the field of work with the blind. Recording for the Blind and Mr. Staley do not avoid conflict and confrontation when they are necessary. You try, as do many other agencies doing work with the blind, to listen to the blind people you wish to serve.

NAC has said that the NFB stands alone in its dissatisfaction with NAC. This, however, is not true. There is a growing feeling of dissatisfaction with NAC. So much so that late in 1973 the General Accounting Office of the United States Government began a thorough investigation of NAC's policies and procedures. Until fairly recently NAC has felt itself invulnerable. There was only one unimportant and insignificant obstacle in its path to complete domination of the field of work with the blind. Ironically enough, this obstacle was the blind themselves who are supposed to be served by NAC's not-so-benevolent despotism.

NAC was no doubt surprised to learn that the blind have never been and will never be the only ones to decry its unfairness. The Government of our country and agencies for the blind, both public and private, are seeing the justice of our cause. The Minnesota School for the Blind has told the NFB of Minnesota that it is not now considering accreditation by NAC. And if it ever does consider accreditation it will seek the opinion of the NFB of Minnesota before taking any definite action. The

Jewish Braille Institute of America has publicly stated its disgust at the makeup and operation of NAC. The Ohio affiliate of the American Association of Workers for the Blind has voted not to support NAC. And the Mississippi Agency for the Blind has decided to repudiate its accreditation by NAC.

Against this list of organizations not favorable to NAC place a few that are favorable. The Minneapolis Society for the Blind, in the same State as the Minnesota School for the Blind, is accredited by NAC and is now under suit for illegal practices and violations of the Minnesota State Constitution. The Cleveland Society for the Blind, in the same State as the Ohio affiliate of the AAWB that did not see fit to support NAC, is accredited by NAC and is also being sued for allegedly stealing over a million dollars from the blind vending stand operators under its control. Then, the Greater Detroit Society for the Blind—also accredited by NAC and with its director, Mr. MacAllister Upshaw, serving on the NAC Board—is defending itself in the courts. The people who wholeheartedly support NAC and its operations seem to get more and more unsavory each year.

The importance of the battle with NAC cannot be overstated. NAC is seeking to dominate the blind. The blind are seeking participation in NAC. NAC has stated that we are no more capable or competent than the retarded patients of a mental hospital. We reject this assessment of our ability. And we will prove to NAC how capable we are. It will be our capabilities which reform NAC or destroy it. The blind students of America are committed, along with thousands of other blind people. We will work this year to reform NAC or defeat it, and next year, and the year after if

necessary. Either the blind will have liberty or they will be subservient. We have already decided. We shall have liberty.

The list of people and organizations that do not support NAC is long and growing longer. It includes a large number of Congressmen and Senators. Unfortunately, Recording for the Blind is presently accredited by NAC. In being accredited by NAC, RFB gives the support of its good name to NAC. The blind of the NFB Student Division respect RFB and its executive director—they are deserving of respect. We believe that RFB is not the same kind of organization that NAC is, and we believe that you will not want to associate yourselves with NAC after you have considered the differences between NAC and RFB. The blind students of America believe that you are truly trying to serve the blind. We respect you, and know you respect us. We ask that you disavow your accreditation by NAC.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,
New York, New York, February 26, 1974.

Mr. MARC MAURER,
South Bend, Indiana.

DEAR MR. MAURER: Thank you for sending me a printed copy of the remarks you made before the Executive Committee of Recording for the Blind on February 12.

I enjoyed meeting you, and am pleased that we had the opportunity to converse

briefly before the committee was called to order. As you could tell from my answers to questions directed to me, I felt that a number of your assertions were misleading, uninformed, or exaggerated. Nevertheless, your concern and obvious sincerity are refreshing and impressive.

I hope we can talk again one day.

Sincerely yours,

RICHARD W. BLEECKER, Ed.D.,
Associate Director.

South Bend, Indiana, March 26, 1974.

RICHARD W. BLEECKER, Ed.D.,
Associate Director,
National Accreditation Council
for Agencies Serving the Blind
and Visually Handicapped,
New York, New York.

DEAR DR. BLEECKER: Thank you very much for sending me your letter of February 26. I enjoyed meeting you at RFB and am pleased that we had the opportunity to converse briefly before the committee was called to order. As you could tell from my answers to questions directed to me, I felt that a number of your assertions were misleading, uninformed, or exaggerated. Nevertheless, your concern and obvious sincerity are refreshing and impressive.

I hope we can talk again one day. It is always good to meet a bright young man on the rise.

Sincerely yours,

MARC MAURER.

□

DISSOLUTION OF NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE WITH NAC OVERTONES

Under date of December 21, 1971, Secretary of HEW Elliot Richardson sent a letter to the President of the National Federation of the Blind:

DEAR MR. JERNIGAN: I am delighted to invite you to serve on the National Advisory Committee on Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped of the Social and Rehabilitation Service for a term beginning January 1, 1972, and ending December 31, 1972, subject to prescribed appointment procedures.

Enclosed is a statement which describes the structure and the functions of the Committee.

I hope you will find it possible to accept this invitation and give us the benefit of your valued counsel. You may indicate your acceptance or declination by signing and returning the enclosed Acknowledgement of Invitation.

Upon learning of your acceptance, I shall ask the Administrator, Social and Rehabilitation Service, to supply you with further information relating to your appointment.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

ELLIOT L. RICHARDSON,
Secretary.

President Jernigan accepted the invitation to serve. The first meeting of the Committee was held in Washington March 7-8, 1972. President Jernigan was unable to

attend. However, Dr. James Nyman, the other Federationist on the Committee, was present. His report of the meeting appeared in the July, 1972, *Monitor*.

The second meeting of the Committee occurred in Washington September 11-12, 1972. Both Dr. Nyman and President Jernigan were present. They attempted to get the Committee to discuss the concern of the blind with the undemocratic structure and procedures of NAC.

The Committee refused. This was not surprising in view of its composition. It was heavily stacked in favor of the agencies, with only token representation from the organized blind. The chairman of the Committee was Dr. Peter Salmon, NAC's president. The Federation representatives were told that regardless of the concerns of the blind, no discussion of NAC would be permitted. A full report of the meeting appeared in the November, 1972, *Monitor*.

The third meeting of the Committee (as it later developed, its last) occurred in Washington June 4-5, 1973. Again, the stacked Committee refused to permit any discussion of NAC—this despite the fact that NAC was the most controversial and important issue then facing the blind and that formal request had been made in the approved manner to place the item on the agenda. However, even the hand-picked stacked Committee apparently felt some shame at its undemocratic behavior. Therefore, over the protest of Dr. Salmon it agreed to put NAC on the agenda for the following meeting. This meeting was scheduled for October, 1973, but it never took place.

At the June, 1973, meeting a discussion was held concerning the reduction of the number of advisory committees which had been taking place throughout the Federal Government. The HEW officials present stated that it had been decided to continue the National Advisory Committee on Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. This fact was borne out by the following letter from Secretary of HEW Elliot Richardson appointing the NFB President to a term on the Committee ending December 31, 1975:

Washington, D.C., November 30, 1972.

DEAR MR. JERNIGAN: I am delighted to invite you to serve an additional term beginning immediately, and ending December 31, 1975, on the National Advisory Committee on Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped of the Social and Rehabilitation Service subject to prescribed appointment procedures.

I hope you will find it possible to accept this invitation and give us further benefit of your valued counsel. You may indicate your acceptance or declination by signing and returning the enclosed Acknowledgment of Invitation.

Upon learning of your acceptance, I shall ask the Administrator, Social and Rehabilitation Service, to supply you with additional information relating to your reappointment.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

ELLIOT L. RICHARDSON,
Secretary.

October of 1973 came and went without any word about another meeting. One might have wondered if the Committee chairman and the HEW officials were afraid to permit a full and free discussion of NAC, even before their own hand-picked Committee. The wonder deepened as 1974 came in and still no word.

Then came a beautifully inscribed certificate of appreciation from HEW Secretary Caspar Weinberger, and a letter saying that the National Advisory Committee had done its work and was at an end. The Secretary wrote:

Washington, D.C., March 7, 1974.

DEAR MR. JERNIGAN: It is a pleasure to present this token of appreciation in acknowledgment of your service as a member of the National Advisory Committee on Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

Consistent with the Department's policy to reduce the number of advisory groups to a manageable number, it was determined not to renew this Committee at the time it was scheduled to terminate, October 7, 1973. While this Committee has been dissolved, I hope that at some future time the Department may again seek your advice and counsel on matters of mutual concern. We look forward to that occasion.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank you, and express our sincere appreciation for your having served on the Committee.

Sincerely,

CASPAR W. WEINBERGER,
Secretary.

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. How do you change the atmosphere of misinformation and indifference to the fresh clean air of

truth and understanding, an air in which the blind will no longer permit NAC to deprive them of their rights? One *Monitor* article at a time. □

WHY DOES NAC FEAR AND TREMBLE?

BY

JACOB FREID

[This editorial appeared in a recent issue of the *Jewish Braille Review*.]

The United States is the first industrial technological society to have built change and innovation into the culture. It is the glory of this Nation that the variety which is America provides the opportunities that make for an upwardly mobile social structure. The two contemporary films "The Emigrants" and "The New Land" are poignant, exalting, and evocative dramatizations of this American dream and its promise of equality and self-fulfillment that lured the oppressed of the Old World across the sea to the enchanted land where the old deprivations gave way to the new opportunities. Indeed, America was the land of the second chance.

Each society has its own inner structure and spirit. In the United States there were constant tensions—political, economic, and social—between the egalitarian aspirations of the common people and ethnic groups newly come to America, and the power of the landed, the financial, and, after the Civil War, the industrial oligarchy. The masses were helped here in their upward march by the lack of a feudal past, the refusal to accept authority, the multiplicity of ethnic groups.

The democratic tradition in America is a reality. It is that politics is the arena of the rank and file. The ordinary citizen is the

source of ultimate authority and the sanction of power. As in Rome, so here, there was fear in the earliest days of the Republic of the democratic excesses which the poor and propertyless classes could wreak against those with property, and the Hamiltonians sought to limit the electoral role of the people. But the Federalist barriers were swept away by the victory of the Jeffersonians who established a populist character in American democracy.

This movement had its revival and political apotheosis during the New Deal years of Franklin Roosevelt which shunted aside the old rich aristocrats whose neo-Federalism powered the Republican Harding-Coolidge-Hoover era that collapsed with the trauma of the Depression years. With the end of the long Presidency of FDR and Harry Truman, the new Hamiltonians returned to the seats of power. But this time they were the nouveau riche—the automobile dealers, the real estate promoters, the oil wildcatters, the Madison Avenue go-getters and the professionals who played the game and didn't rock the boat to get ahead. This group in its attempt to secure social status is often anxious, politically feverish, and socially frightened that its social position and prerogatives will be undermined by the hoi polloi rabble who want the equal right

to determine policy and to make decisions which the new kings of the hill have preempted for themselves as lords and masters.

A fluid, unsettled society is always an anxious one. In an egalitarian society where position is fluid, the acquisition of a stable, prestigious status becomes all-important, and any attempt to share such status is considered a conspiratorial threat that is anxiety-provoking. In the South the deepest emotional resentment of the Negro came from the adjacent class, the poor whites who having risen, sought more than ever to emphasize their distance from those below them, to be on top, not on tap, and to give orders and make decisions, not to share them.

The process of status demarcation has been a problem for the rising groups which have sought recognition of their ability (not their disability) to achieve a new

position in American life. This then, is the dimension of the National Federation of the Blind-National Accreditation Council Confrontation. The members of the board of the latter see the participatory-democracy objectives of the former as a conspiratorial threat by radicals to their status in determining the rules and standards in work for the blind. They wish to be rulers not partners. Like the Louis XVI Bourbons they cannot learn or change, and democracy is anathema to them.

And that is why the blind see NAC as a Bastille which they must lay siege to and ultimately storm if they are to continue to progress to equality. It has been one of the glories of the United States that politics has been a pragmatic give-and-take not a war-to-the-death. But those who refuse to share power democratically make the struggle inevitable to achieve it for the many no less than for the oligarchic few. □

CONGRESS CONTINUES TO FIRE AT NAC

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D.C., February 4, 1974.

Mr. JAMES S. DWIGHT, Jr.,
*Administrator, Social and
Rehabilitation Service,
Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare,
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. DWIGHT: Early last December a member of my staff, Dr. John W. Robbins, attempted to reach you by phone in order to request that the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind not receive a grant which was under consideration at that time until the GAO audit of the NAC was completed. Unable to reach you personally, Dr. Robbins left the message with one of your aides.

I understand that the grant was in fact delayed for almost a month and given to NAC on January 21, 1974. Would you please explain to me why the grant was made when the GAO audit was not yet completed? The time element is important, for the audit, I understand, is to be released this month, which means that a period of only one month would have elapsed beyond the actual date of making the grant. Is it standard operating procedure in your agency, that public monies be given to agencies that are under investigation? Awaiting a reply, I am,

Sincerely yours,

EARL F. LANDGREBE.

[Congressman Landgrebe is a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor.] □

LET'S FEDERATE

BY

T. EUCLID RAINS, Sr.

[Reprinted from the January 1974 *Alabama Bulletin Board*, newsletter of the NFB of Alabama. Euclid Rains is editor of the newsletter.]

"There'll never be another *now*! Come along mate—don't hesitate—let's federate."

The National Federation of the Blind is by far the largest organization of blind persons in the world—it is thirty to forty times the size of its nearest rival. The NFB is a true movement of a minority group that is in a quest for first-class citizenship status.

The National Federation of the Blind is the oldest organization of its peculiar kind in the Western Hemisphere—having been organized by the late, great Dr. Jacobus tenBroek in 1940. This was only eight years after our present Braille alphabet was adopted internationally. And it was a short fourteen years after this alphabet was first used in all eleven grades at the Alabama School for the Blind. (Note.—During the school term of 1948-49 the twelfth grade was added at ASB. The graduating class of 1949 was the first to finish under this new system.)

Over the years the NFB has gained experience and influence in securing for the blind of our Nation wider advantages, opportunities, and rights.

Dr. tenBroek and other far-sighted leaders of the blind put together an organization that has grown year by year into a vibrant force that is effectively securing for the blind citizens of our Nation the blessings of equality and

prosperity. It is proving to be a force strong enough to destroy the strangling sort of senseless discrimination that is holding countless blind persons out of the mainstream of society and the business of the work-a-day world.

Before World War II less than ten blind men in Alabama could walk into their local banks and borrow money without a co-signer and not one could buy life insurance without paying a penalty for his blindness. One visually handicapped man was employed in a furniture shop about 1940. When it became known that he had attended the school for the blind he was promptly fired. Dr. tenBroek sought through the action of the NFB to bring to an end such practices against American citizens who wear the eternal hoodwink of blindness.

There are some agency leaders, and even some blind persons, who try to tell us that the storm of discrimination against the blind in Alabama is over. That we are now in a calm period of progress—and all our needs and rights are being looked after by professionals who know best for us. They do not express it in exactly these terms but it gets to meaning the same exactly.

To those who would have us believe that there is no discrimination in Alabama I address these questions: (1) How many blind men and women have you known to serve on Alabama juries? The blind can be

tried in Alabama courts but are not considered capable of dishing out justice from a jury box. (2) How many blind teachers do you know now employed in the public schools of this State? (It would not be fair to include teachers of special classes of the blind.) There are hundreds of blind teachers employed in the public schools of other states throughout the country. It might be fair here to note that in those states where the National Federation of the Blind is strongest, the incidence of blind teacher employment in the public school system is considerably higher.

There are two contrasting examples of blind teachers being hired in Alabama's public schools in this century.

Clayton McCoy, a 1960 graduate of ASB, having a master's degree, was placed, through the influence of an agency serving the blind, as a teacher in Monroeville High School in the mid-1960s. In the course of his work during the first year he experienced a "discipline problem." His principal did not invite him back. As a member of the board of the Institute, I felt it my express duty to make a strong plea in his behalf. I strongly urged proper officials to defend his position in every reasonable way. I felt that a precedent was being set here that would seriously affect all the blind graduates of the Institute who would follow Clayton in the field of higher education. I urged that they defend Clayton on the grounds that the whole country was in a social revolution and that student rebellion and disobedience was general across the State and Nation—and that Clayton should not fall victim to a double standard of justice. I held that he should be treated in the same manner in which other teachers were

treated who had discipline problems. In other schools in the same school term there were hundreds of discipline problems that were too big for sighted teachers to resolve, so they referred them to their principals. These principals, some of them to my knowledge, dealt properly with all these problems but did not fire the sighted teachers who had passed the buck. I was told that "We are doing everything that we can do in this matter." They said, "We cannot hire him back." But I said, "I understand that, but we can make them treat him as an American citizen and taxpayer—in spite of his race, creed, color, national origin, or physical condition." They were right. They were helpless and could not go any further than they did. Their agency and the school system that was employing Clayton were governmental brothers—both State and Federal children; neither one having authority over the other. My blind friends, are you getting the message? All government children are servants of the people. The blind of this Nation are citizens—not pawns—and are not supposed to be moved about and used as pieces on a chess board. We are not mere begging fodder to get bigger and bigger appropriations year after year to be used to raise the standard of living for bosses who have errantly placed their own faith and the fate of their blind clients in the bleak hope that resides in rhetoric and concrete blocks. This Nation still derives its just powers from "we the people." If the National Federation of the Blind had been strong in Alabama, this gross injustice might not have befallen Clayton McCoy.

My second example of a blind school teacher in the public schools of Alabama occurred before we had the agencies to fend for us. About 1918 J. Gregory Pinson, who had also finished at the Alabama

School for the Blind, was employed as a teacher in the Coosa County schools. Year after year Mr. Pinson was invited back to his position in the system for some ten years.

Mr. O. K. Weldon, then Superintendent of Education in Coosa County, died in 1928. The county board selected Mr. J. Gregory Pinson to finish serving Mr. Weldon's term.

In 1930 Mr. Pinson stood for election and won a four-year term as Superintendent. By 1934 the law had changed so that the county board had to make the appointment. The board unanimously picked Mr. Pinson for another four-year term.

By 1938 the law had been revised again so Mr. Pinson stood for election a second time and won. In October of 1942 a serious tragedy struck him. He suffered a stroke that made it impossible for him to serve any longer in the office he had held for fourteen years.

A blind man had worked for twenty-four years in the public school system of Alabama! And he had done it without any agency help. My blind friends, are you getting the message? In addition to Mr. Pinson's marvelous powers of persuasion and salesmanship, he had the will and influence of "the people" behind him. He had attended three universities and a Baptist seminary. All who knew him recognized his superior ability and remarkable education. The inherent American sense of fairness rendered it necessary that his fellow creatures give to him at least a portion of his just dues, despite his physical handicap. Had he been a sighted man they perhaps might have

made him a university president—but, in spite of his magnificent accomplishments, he was required to pay the costly and shameful penalty because of blindness—that ancient, heathen figment of discrimination which is the bane of the social order.

When General Eisenhower was made Supreme Commander of Allied Forces during World War II, he wired President Roosevelt that he needed the services of a certain able general, who was still in the States. President Roosevelt replied to General Eisenhower's request in these words, "General Eisenhower, I think that you should know that General — has a bad knee." To which General Eisenhower promptly responded, "It is his head that I want, not his knee." He got his handicapped general in time for the invasion of Europe.

Surely it is not *our* brains they are discriminating against! Throughout the ages blind men and women have competed favorably with their sighted counterparts in all the fields of human endeavor—more especially in academic pursuits.

Homer, John Milton, Louis Braille, Helen Keller, and ASB's own Dr. Josiah S. Graves have all given the world some of its greatest treasures. They were second to none. All stood at the forge of life and wrought their invaluable contributions to the civilized courts of men with a dexterity characteristic of champions and with a dedication and determination known only to God.

In conclusion, I will say that the National Federation of the Blind is a strong organization of blind "*people*"—the stuff from which all state agencies, and even the

United States Government for that matter, derives all just powers. The NFB has been making life better for blind men and women for thirty-three years and yet we have a long way to go. I believe in the ideals and goals of the NFB and I want each blind citizen of Alabama to examine these seriously for himself. Read *The Braille Monitor* for a year. Study the many NFB court cases in behalf of our blind citizens who have been arbitrarily denied

their constitutional rights. Then make your own decision.

My blind friends, this is not a petty game of likes and dislikes. It is truly the game of Life and the stakes are nothing less than our future. I believe that at this very moment we, the blind, are "nobly winning or menially losing" our sacred heritage. It is possible that the ship of blessings, honor, and prosperity is forever now slipping by our ports in the night. □

HADLEY ANNOUNCES NEW COURSES—DR. KINNEY WRITES TO NFB PRESIDENT

The Hadley Correspondence School for the Blind, located in Winnetka, Illinois, is truly a unique institution. Its courses are varied and imaginatively presented, and its attitudes toward the blind are refreshingly positive. Typical of the Hadley approach is a recent letter to the NFB President from Dr. Richard Kinney, the school's brilliant deaf-blind Executive Director. Dr. Kinney wrote:

We very much enjoyed the recent visit of Mr. Duane Gerstenberger and hope his call here sets the precedent for many further visits when NFB holds its certain-to-be-terrific Convention in Chicago next July. I had a long and stimulating personal chat with Mr. Gerstenberger via the Tellatouch, which he handled with ease and aplomb.

I am writing today to request your counsel on a matter of importance. As you know, we at Hadley not only believe in consulting consumers about potential courses, but also earnestly wish to make known the full range of courses we have available to those who may wish to take advantage of them. *The Braille Monitor* has been most helpful in this regard, publishing in recent months our consumer survey and many course announcements. We do have over a hundred courses, however, and it is the full range of these we would like to make known through a

twenty-five-minute soundsheet we have recently prepared. Is there any possibility that a soundsheet such as the enclosed could be sent along with an issue of *The Braille Monitor* in its three published forms or that a separate mailing, paid for by us, could be made to all potential consumers on *The Monitor's* mailing list? We would be happy, for instance, to send you enough copies of the soundsheet in suitable envelopes for you to address and mail at our cost to all on your mailing list. There is no problem about sending our soundsheet to agencies, rehabilitation centers, et cetera, but we'd like to get the information directly into the hands of the consumers, who are in the best position, after all, to judge of their own needs and desires.

Let me thank you personally for your thoughtful and pertinent contribution to "Relevant Speech," a cassette course which is now ready and a special blurb of which I am also enclosing. Your practical tips to blind speakers are a highlight of the course, which I hope many Federationists will find helpful in their manifold communication activities.

I shall appreciate any suggestions you can give me.

Sincerely,

RICHARD KINNEY,
Executive Director.

President Jernigan replied that the Federation would be pleased to send the Hadley announcement to all *Monitor* readers. This will be done in the near future. It is one more evidence of the

beneficial results which can be achieved when agencies doing work with the blind coordinate their efforts with the organized blind in a partnership of progress. As we have often said, it is the way of the future. □

THE RIGHT BOOK FOR THE RIGHT READER

BY

FLORENCE GRANNIS

Editor's Note.—Mrs. Grannis is Assistant Director in charge of Library and Social Services, Iowa Commission for the Blind.

When deciding which books should be produced for the "Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped" program, a number of factors must be considered. Overwhelmingly, the total reading needs of the people who are eligible for the service must be met by *this* program. Whereas sighted people have so many sources of print they never need use their public libraries at all (and to the sorrow of librarians, many never do), and many sighted individuals feel they are being buried beneath an avalanche of print, blind and physically handicapped people who cannot read normal print have only a few accesses to reading—they may have "readers," some magazines, the Bible (possibly), and other denominational literature—and the materials supplied by their regional libraries.

This puts the responsibility for providing a *satisfactory* collection of books on the libraries. Leaving large type books out of consideration, the media of the books we are concerned with are cassette, talking books, Braille, and (to a much lesser degree) magnetic tape. Each library has at least a theoretical potential of producing Braille and volunteer-read cassette and

open reel magnetic tapes, so that *that* library can have the books its director believes its borrowers and potential borrowers want. The rub comes with the talking book and the *professionally*-read cassette books! Alas, only the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress has the capacity to produce *quality*-read recorded books! (I am not overlooking the fact that there are *some* spoken word records that can be purchased; judiciously acquired they enrich the collection, but they are scarce and tend to be abridged, so in the total picture they are negligible).

The regional libraries are *public* libraries serving a wide cross section of citizens—citizens with all sorts of interests. Actually, our patrons have only one element in common—their inability to read normal print. Therefore, they should have in their libraries the books all other self-respecting libraries have.

The "Books for the Blind" bill was passed in 1931. So, for more than forty years we have had a chance to work away and acquire the books our citizens need. There is no point in casting brickbats, but I am confident no one will dispute that we have by no means reached the potential we might have. We do not have a good basic core collection in any one medium or in all the media combined.

What to do about it? If we can have only 1,200 titles per year—give or take a few—each of these 1,200 must be selected as a precious gem. Great care should be used in determining which books should be reissued or rerecorded. Great care should be used in selecting *each* specific new book. Each should be a vital element in an overall *plan*—no haphazard *random* choice. Only *superior* representatives of each category should be selected.

Now for a specific plan: using the already available “model library” aids and the other expertise of the Division staff, there should be consideration of *which books should be* in any self-respecting library. See how the Library of Congress-provided collection measures up. Critically analyze those books which all self-respecting libraries should have which are not in the LC-provided collection and program *those* to be produced—over a period of time (perhaps 10% of the total production each year). Scrutinize *each segment* of the collection and see its weaknesses as relating to the yardstick of the model library aids, and over a period of years concentrate on eliminating these weak segments. Has history been slighted?—biography?—then emphasize the best books in *those slighted areas* for production.

Many public libraries now use paperbacks to fill the need for the trivial. We have this potential and should use it! Rather than having good solid Federal money sunk into a book like *The Happy Hooker* let National Collections volunteer cassette it and *lend* it to the libraries so that they can copy and distribute it (our equivalent of paperbacks could be arrived at a number of ways, too).

Now for a specific statement of a book selection policy for the Division to use in determining which books it should cause to be produced: The number of different titles held by the libraries of the world is upwards of seventy-five million. Five

hundred thousand printed items are added each year. The realistic total field for us *to choose from* is one million older books, forty thousand current books, and thirty thousand public documents. Keep in mind again, our libraries are public libraries. The community, the blind and physically handicapped people eligible for our services, constitute our parent institution.

And with all this wealth—this veritable plethora of print to choose from—and only a piddle to be produced—we cannot afford even *one* “wrong” choice (by “wrong” I mean *one* that does not fit into the total plan)—and I must emphasize I believe we can no longer have *unplanned* selection. All libraries have the old dichotomy in selecting books—value versus demand. Since the number of titles that can be chosen in our program is necessarily very limited, this dichotomy becomes even more serious. In 1925 a British librarian, Lionel R. McColvin, published his *Theory of Books Selection for Public Libraries*, pointing out that unless a book is desired by some member of the library’s clientele, it is useless and should not have been purchased, though it may be of very high quality (value). On the other hand, quality books are clearly preferable if they are likely to be used at all. Demand, therefore, should be given relative weight. A book with a demand factor estimated at forty and a value factor of twenty would be a better selection than a title likely to be more popular (with a demand factor of seventy) and a value factor of ten. To try to guess value and potential demand in such definite terms is obviously impossible, as McColvin knew, but he did provide us with a two-dimensional frame for thinking of possible purchases. Nowadays, it is often said that if a librarian tends to buy certain books because these are the ones he thinks his users want, he is favoring the demand theory, while if he prefers to obtain materials considered “good for” his clientele, he is favoring the value theory.¹

In an article about modern poetry, Bill Katz contends, "I firmly believe that those who build a collection only on the basis of demand are dead wrong and a trifle muddled in their approach to what libraries are all about." Another writer declares, "the proper business of the public library is with the *serious* reader . . . 'serious' reading is any that improves one's stock of knowledge, enlarges one's horizon, or improves one's values." Another quotation will be enough. Ralph A. Ulveling, Former Director of the Detroit Public Library, wrote, "There are cheap, worthless novels that have no place in a library even if they achieve 'best seller' standing. Likewise, there are books of ideas that belong in a comprehensive book collection even though most people consider the ideas impractical or unsound."

In the same vein, it is stressed that the library has a positive obligation to educate. The Public Library Association in an official statement terms this kind of library an "open door to the wisdom and experience of mankind." To educate requires materials of value. The librarian is here seen as a force for influencing human thought and behavior, not as a politician with an ear to the ground, seeking cheap popularity.²

The Case for Emphasizing Demand

As far back as 1894, the librarian of the St. Louis Public Library stated his position simply: "In the first place, we try to provide the books people want—not those we think they ought to read." Margaret Monroe of the University of Wisconsin Library School, echoed McClovin saying, "Bluntly, if there is no demand, there is no service," going on to state that a library may educate its readers' demands, but that education is not manipulation.

It is asked by other proponents of this theory: Who is the librarian to impose his tastes of what is best on the citizens who support the library? Is he omniscient that he may dictate what the people need? Even if the library's primary obligation is to educate the public, does not that allow for a wide range in quality? In harmony with this view note a statement by the great Argentine librarian, author, and professor, Jorge Luis Borges:

I tell my students that if you begin a book, if at the end of fifteen or twenty pages you feel that the book is a task for you, then lay that book and lay that author aside for a time because it won't do you any good . . . if you don't like De Quincey then let him alone, my task is not to impose my likes or dislikes on you . . . if you find your way to a few authors or a few authors find their way to you, then that's as it should be.

The case continues: The public foots the bill; it should be able to find the reading matter which it wants, educational or not. People should be provided with materials they will use even if those things are loathed by highbrows. What sense does it make to buy "quality" books if so few care for them?

This line of reasoning, which emphasizes demand in the theory of selection, gives weight also to observations by such investigators as G. Robert Carlsen, Professor of English and education, University of Iowa. After extensive studies, Carlsen has described how readers often progress from sentimental romances and cheap adventure stories (Zane Grey, Faith Baldwin, or the *Peyton Place*-type shockers of yesterday) to works acknowledged as great. It follows then that low-quality reading materials have a useful purpose. To deny readers such pleasures is like

expecting a human being to be born as a one hundred eighty pound heavyweight rather than as an infant who will grow up slowly.³

How is this dilemma to be resolved? It is fundamental, and undeniably both these viewpoints make a good deal of sense. Well, the dilemma will not be resolved. Both value and demand must be taken into account. They must, most particularly, be stressed in selecting for libraries for the blind and physically handicapped.

In a free society the public library—and again let me stress, our libraries are public libraries—exists only because it renders a service to the people. That means it takes into account what the citizens themselves want. The people judge. In a closed or totalitarian society libraries may still avow that their major purpose is doing good for the people. This assertion generally means meeting needs as interpreted by the leaders. Those in authority say what is good for the population they rule. One of the prime reasons for relieving the people of their freedom is to do for them what government “knows” to be best. The rulers judge.

If this were the whole story, however, totalitarian societies might seem to have an advantage, in that they at least intend to improve the people’s thinking and culture. If the librarians select according to what the public wants, will not the people choose merely to remain at their present level, and within the limits of their experience up to this time? The reply of the democratic faith is a resounding no. The people themselves should be given the opportunity to improve their tastes voluntarily from within. Demand for library material, then, is to be assessed in

terms of what the people will prefer if presented with quality works along with the commonplace.

Not all needs for particular titles are immediate and expressed. One who has never read Shakespeare will hardly swoon for lack of a copy of *King Lear*. He has to sample it first. The greatest writers, composers, and artists of the past were not appreciated generally until the public had a chance to become acquainted with their work. A school which teaches only what students think they want to know will not take them very far beyond their present level of knowledge. While it is obvious that people are not tearing down the doors to consume the best reading matter, it still is true that they are not rejecting the best. Many can and do improve their tastes. They seek some guidance as to what is good.

The public library then is not serving a very useful function unless it makes available the best for the small number who will appreciate it. The fact that the majority may right now prefer the average or the inferior does not mean that minorities have to be denied. The free society and its librarians do not have to stagnate at the lowest common denominator. The library should be a place of adventure, one which is interesting to explore for the sake of making discoveries just because it provides new and unfamiliar materials—the kinds not recognized as valuable until they are experienced.

The librarian might as well be resigned to living with some tension on this matter of value versus demand.⁴ At times he may find himself leaning strongly toward the value factor—at others he may be more preoccupied with meeting the immediate

wants of the majority. How is demand assessed? It can be taken for granted that books relating to things currently in the news will be demanded. Also it can be taken for granted that books which have been opposed will be in demand. Certain books will be expected to be available in any self-respecting library. Again, demand is assessed by knowing the people who use the library. To do the best job the librarian should be acquainted with these individuals personally and should recognize those materials that mesh with their interests. In a framework where it is possible, each user might be asked whether he has any suggestions for new material to be put in the collection. As a personal aside here, whenever we have a request for a book which is not in our collection we analyze it to see if perhaps we should produce it on cassette or in Braille. All libraries are, or should be, providing for each individual, one at a time—each individual presently using the service, each individual who might be using the service. The simple motto, “The right book for the right reader,” is appropriate. It has been predicted that librarianship will develop in the future a specialty to be called something like psychobibliotics, using the discoveries of psychology as a base, and stressing the deep analysis of readers’ interests and needs. This knowledge may serve to implement the motto just quoted—The right book for the right reader.

These statements about value and demand issued for ordinary public libraries are just as relevant to our libraries. Again, let me stress the great difference is that sighted readers can get their reading materials many other ways than from libraries. Generally speaking, our borrowers cannot. Also we must always keep in mind

the needs of *potential* borrowers. When new borrowers come to us, we don’t want to come up lacking.

To refer again to the conception of a balanced book collection—of course, there is no such thing as perfect balance in the absolute; for if it ever existed that delicate state would be destroyed with the addition of more books or new readers. The real goal is to build an optimum collection for a given community of users or possible users. In such a library it would be the part of common sense to have a few books which appeal to each interest rather than to fatten up one area too fast. If among users there happen to be about as many dog lovers as cat fans and if a number of books about each kind of animal are available, then it would seem best for the library to obtain the best of each kind rather than forty dog books and one cat book (this notion would not imply that every time the library orders a cat book it has to get one of the other kind also just to prevent growls of dissatisfaction).

In order to be fair and to insure the presentation of as much truth as possible there should be some materials on all sides of controversial issues. An old dictum has it that the librarian, as librarian, should have no politics, no religion, and no morals. Some would add: and no level of intelligence. A more positive approach would be that the librarian has a humane sympathy for people of many political, religious, and moral views as well as for those with different degrees of intelligence. All responsible opinions should be represented. However, there is no reason to give absolutely equal time to flat-earth advocates in order to balance those of the spherical and pear-shape persuasions. One or two books on the former position

should suffice.⁵ One of the evidences that the librarian is a professional is his ability to develop collections. This task is not accomplished smoothly or easily as a skyscraper rises story by story. The analogy is something like this: the librarian builds according to a purpose (philosophy of selection) which is subject to continual revision; moreover, the specific blueprints will be altered as the needs of occupants (library patrons) change. As the occupants themselves move in and out of the community, the librarian is never sure what bricks are going to be available or what new ones will come on the market, and he must make a careful judgment as to the suitability of each one (though fortunately a few crumbly bricks will not cause the structure to topple). In most libraries, bricks may be knocked out and others inserted after a short time. The builder of the library collection does not know how large the structure may become, but he does know that it will never be finished.⁶

The predominant theme of a selection policy should be a positive emphasis on patrons' needs and rights. It need not have a defensive tone. At times, though, it may be used legitimately as a buffer against unjust complaints. If some person has an objection to a book which has been obtained, or if he blames the library for refusal to buy another, the librarian can cite the stipulations of official policy. The plaintiff then has the right to try to have the policy changed, but the focus of the argument has been shifted from the particular title to a question of principle.⁷

If the *Book Selection Policy for the Blind and Physically Handicapped* prepared by the Regional Librarians' Advisory Committee on Book Selection, 1970,⁸ and which follows (slightly modified), is

considered in light of what has already been said, it should prove to be very acceptable.

The policy of book selection for providing reading materials for the blind and physically handicapped is governed by consideration that the interests of blind and physically handicapped readers are substantially the same as those of other readers. The handicapped readers will deny that their tastes differ in any particular. Some prefer the older, some the current authors; they want recreational, informational books, professional texts and reference. They represent a cross section of the American people. From this, two basic principles emerge; that these readers are similar in needs and tastes to other readers, and that they wish to have access to the same books that are available to their nonhandicapped friends.

The selection of books for the blind and physically handicapped follows practically the same procedures as does the selection of books for other readers with certain modifications imposed by the peculiar media of communication involved. The collections to be developed are comparable (within the limitations of available funds for purchase) to those being developed for other clientele by small public libraries serving a wide range of reader interest.

In the light of this general knowledge as to the character and interests of the group to be served certain principles and procedures in book selection are applied.

1. *Balance.* To insure the development and maintenance of a properly balanced collection from current publications

selection is made on the basis of certain criteria:

A. *Variety*. The primary objective is to provide a balanced collection that will satisfy a wide diversity in reader appeal. Efforts are made to respond to the wishes of a preponderance of the readers, who seem to prefer fiction or other popularly presented works, and at the same time to insure representation of more serious and informative works. Most readers prefer new books, but there is also a demand for the older books. Each year a certain number of older books are selected on the basis of enduring quality and continued interest. This assures the creation of a collection that will include both current and older titles.

B. *Quality*. In the selection of new titles consideration must be given to quality in terms of both subject content and literary merit. The application of this criterion requires continuous reference to various sources of information such as lists of current publications and book review media and comparisons of various editions to secure those most adequate for the purpose.

2. *Readers*. An underlying principle governing selection is acceptance of the evidence that these readers are in the best position to know their own interests. To accomplish as complete a responsiveness to their wishes as can be achieved, certain procedures are employed:

A. *Reader preference surveys*. From time to time surveys of the reading habits of these readers have been conducted to determine preferences in terms of age groups, talking book readers, touch readers, professional groups, et cetera.

B. *Requests from readers and librarians*. Consideration is given to both specific and general requests made by these readers through correspondence, as well as to similar requests from librarians for the blind and physically handicapped.

C. *Recommendations by book selection committees*. The recommendations of the various selection committees are carefully considered and evaluated to achieve a consensus of the groups. (See Section on Advisory Committees.)

3. *Appropriateness of two media of transcription—embossing and recording*. In process of selection, attention must be given to the principle of appropriateness of the two media—embossing and recording—for transcription. Criteria applicable to selection under this principle are:

A. Certain books, for example those in which complete appreciation or understanding of the text is dependent to a large degree upon the reproduction of illustrations, graphs, charts, et cetera, *are not suitable for satisfactory reproduction in either medium*.

B. Certain books of an informational character relying upon repeated reference to specific passages or consultation of an index are not suitable for recorded books, *although they can be utilized in Braille*. Books cannot be excluded from the program because of possibly offensive language or style.

4. *Special Categories*.

A. In line with the policy of offering blind and physically handicapped readers an opportunity for selection comparable (within limitation of funds) to that

afforded other readers, the Library will make available publications bearing on current political affairs. Here again the consideration of balance and continuing interest, as well as the time lag necessitated by the procedures of transcription and distribution, must be taken into account.

B. Although religious works of wide general use of an informational and inspirational character are in great demand and should be made available, works of special denominational religious interest would not be considered suitable for inclusion. Such works are now frequently transcribed and distributed by denominational presses, and are welcome additions to the collections of the regional libraries as gift material.

C. Works involving controversy cannot be precluded without seriously limiting the vitality of reading material to which the blind and handicapped will have access. Efforts are directed to presenting if possible all aspects of an issue or securing books of equal calibre supporting varying viewpoints. The degree to which this maintenance of balance can be achieved will depend upon the availability of appropriate material.

To go back to our skyscraper analogy again, the basic plan—the blueprints of our collection—should be deliberately and consciously scrutinized each year. Which subject or interest segments especially need strengthening? Which have been strengthened greatly? Which new books are obvious *musts* as additions to the collections, and what have these *musts*

done to the book balance? What are the technological developments relevant to our program, and what impact—if any—should they have on book selection? (Consider flimsies, new ways of indexing, et cetera.) Are there new and better ways of creating our equivalent of paperbacks? Are individual area libraries developing strong, special first-class collections that are available to other libraries throughout the country so that the Division can de-emphasize these subject areas?

Let us make our skyscraper—our book collection—something to be proud of—a thing of beauty—a structure we can point to and say, “This is the house that LC built. It contains—manifestly and manifoldly—the right book for the right reader.”

FOOTNOTES

¹ Robert N. Broadus, *Selecting Materials for Libraries* (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1973), p. 14.

² *Ibid.*, 15.

³ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸ The committee consisted of: Wynn Hunnicutt, Chairman; Betty Funke; Michael Coyle; and Frances Warnsholtz. □

A LESSON FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

Not the least of the results of Federationism has been the heightened awareness which blind people have come to feel. Many things which would once have been taken for granted or passed over without notice are now questioned. And not only questioned but also acted upon. The Federation is more than an organization. It is a way of thought, a feeling of responsibility, a determination to create a new climate of public opinion and public attitudes about blindness. It is individuals—each working in *his* own community on a day-to-day basis with all of the small details that make the total pattern—each bound to all other Federationists by a common bond of belief and hope and new understanding: Walking alone but marching together.

Frederick Sanderson is a Federationist. He is a Latin teacher. He leads a full life—which means, among other things, that he helps his wife prepare Sunday school lessons.

Recently, Frederick Sanderson did not like what he found in the Sunday school book, so he did something about it. He wrote to the publishers of the Sunday school lesson and introduced them to Federationism. He sent copies to the President of the Federation and set in motion a chain of events:

Shawano, Wisconsin, February 11, 1974.

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS
PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT,
CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE,
St. Louis, Missouri.

DEAR SIR: This letter is in regard to the Session 11 lesson, contained in the

Preprimary Guide NK Green Program, entitled: *How Jesus Helped a Blind Man*. The material contained in this lesson was disparaging to blind people because it gave the impression that the blind were helpless, unemployed, pitiable, sad, lonely, and unable to contribute to society. The material continuously makes the point that sight is a priceless gift for which the children should be thankful, and lack of it is a tragedy without end. Here are a few examples from the material to illustrate these points. "The desired outcome, then, is that the children may thank Jesus for their eyes that can see, and may ask Jesus for his love and for help in all their troubles." (p. 50) The unintended outcome of such a statement is that blindness is indeed a terrible trouble. Here is another example of creating the impression that blindness can only be tragic and bewildering. "Or let the children close their eyes and handle various objects trying to guess from the sense of touch what the object is." (p. 50) It is incredible that the author of this material never considered the fact that blind persons have developed their sense of touch for purposes of reading and distinguishing between articles which they use daily.

Here are more examples of informed stupidity demonstrated by this lesson. "At the book table, a helper may show books of God's beautiful world, pointing out how wonderful it is that we can see so many things with the good eyes God gives us." (p. 50) Are there not Braille and recorded books available to the blind? There is even a library in the same building as your publishing house specializing in the production of Braille and recorded

materials. Here is the epitome of insensitivity and ignorance displayed by the author of this lesson. "What did you see on the way to Sunday School today? Some people can't see. Do you know why? Yes, they are blind. Put your hands over your eyes. Keep them there and tell me what is on the picture I have here. You can't tell, can you? That's because you can't see it." (p. 51) How about this? "He couldn't see the flowers . . . or the blue sky . . . or the green grass." (p. 51) He could feel, touch, and smell the flowers and the grass, couldn't he? Or does the loss of sight immediately cause the loss of all of the other senses so that an individual who has lost his sight can no longer experience anything?

Just as devastating as what the lesson does say are the things which it doesn't say. For example, the lesson does not point out that the Lord Jesus provides to people who are blind the ability to adapt so that the blindness is not a major obstacle to them. The article does not mention that the blind people of today can get mobility training so that they can travel about as effectively as any sighted person when they use a cane or dog guide. The article does not even mention the Library for the Blind sponsored by the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. The final impression given to the children by the lesson is summed up in these words: "We cannot make blind people see again. But we can tell people who are blind or sad or lonely or afraid that Jesus loves and forgives them." (p. 52) The implication here of course is that blind people are of necessity sad, lonely, and afraid.

It should be apparent that the writer of this lesson obviously knew nothing about the subject which he was trying to teach. It

should also be apparent that such a lesson can do much harm to blind persons who are striving to demonstrate that they are able to function effectively in society, hold jobs, and enjoy life. It would seem appropriate that this particular lesson be eliminated, and that another lesson dealing with this subject in a much more intelligent and sensitive manner replace it. There is an old American Indian proverb which says: "One cannot understand the experiences and feelings of another until he walks in the other's moccasins." I submit that this applies to those responsible for preparing lessons dealing with the blind for the Sunday school curriculum. Thus, the person charged with this responsibility ought to do the following when preparing material. First, write to the National Federation of the Blind, Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, President, 524 Fourth Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309 for information about blindness and programs for the blind. Second, write to the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20542, Frank Cylke, Director, for information about available reading materials for the blind. Third, interview blind persons about this subject, and ask for their help in preparing Sunday school materials. Fourth, consult with the staff of the library for the blind located in your building.

I am a certified teacher of Latin and English, and also hold a certification as guidance counselor. I am presently employed as director of guidance services for Menominee County Community School in Keshena, Wisconsin. On weekends, I help my wife prepare Sunday school lessons which explains why I am acquainted with

this material. Incidentally, I am blind. I am sending a copy of this letter to Dr. J. Preus, President, Missouri Synod.

Sincerely,

FREDERICK SANDERSON.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD,
BOARD OF PARISH EDUCATION,
St. Louis, Missouri, February 18, 1974.

Dr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,
*President, National Federation of the Blind,
Des Moines, Iowa.*

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: In producing Sunday school lessons that deal with Jesus' healing blind people, we want to be sensitive to the feelings of the blind, also knowledgeable about their present-day limitations, adjustments, and opportunities.

Therefore, we would appreciate your sending us any information you have on blindness and programs for the blind.

Sincerely,

DANIEL R. BUROW,
*Coordinating Editor
of Preprimary Materials.*

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, February 21, 1974.

Mr. FREDERICK SANDERSON,
Shawano, Wisconsin.

DEAR MR. SANDERSON: I have your excellent letter, and I thank you for sending it to me. Not only did you see something which needed doing but you did it, effectively and without delay. I have now heard from Reverend Daniel Burow from the Board of Parish Education with a request that I provide him with information about blindness. He sent me a copy of your letter and of the lesson in question. I will send him material immediately.

I am sending your letter to the editors of *The Braille Monitor* for consideration. We will try to do an article as soon as possible. Thanks again for sending me the material and for your prompt and perceptive action.

Cordially,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
*President,
National Federation of the Blind.*

□

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S MAIL BASKET

DEAR MR. JERNIGAN: I am sure the questions I am about to ask you may seem silly—if not quite trivial. However, I feel they are questions that could be bothersome to other blind people besides me. Therefore, I would be interested in your answers.

I recently took a test which I was not able to take after class. The reason for this was that I had made a previous engagement that I was not able to cancel. Yet, I considered it quite important that I not use my previous engagement as an excuse for not taking the test the same day the others were taking it. I asked my instructor if it would be alright if I just did the test in Braille. To this she said no. She said the class would have to wait on me to finish—which, in fact, is somewhat true. Instead, she said I could take the test orally by giving my answers aloud to both her and the class. She then stated that she did not normally ask a student to do this, but she said she was sure that, because of the ease with which I had handled the materials the day before, I would not miss any of the questions.

I felt at that moment (perhaps it was oversensitivity on my part; I don't know) that I had better not get any answers wrong. Yet, I also felt that it was better to have done it that way than to have asked to wait a day or so. As it turned out, everything went fine. I only missed one question and really "heard the word" for that from the other students, but all was in fun, I think. Some of them also said later

how smart they thought I was. But I think they were backhandedly complimenting me for being a smart *blind* girl. Perhaps this, too, is trivial.

Mr. Jernigan, I am not one to brood about something that has already been done, but I would like your notions on this question. Which do you think is more important: taking the test the same day, or possibly being embarrassed by way of a wrong answer? I've had many teachers in the past—during my first years of public school—who have said that other students in the class would not mind my taking tests a day or so later than they did. I am quite sure that some of them do mind (and did then).

On the other hand, I have the strange feeling that more is expected of me since nine times out of ten an instructor is not going to ask another student to read his answers aloud unless it is for a punishment or some such thing. At any rate, Mr. Jernigan, what are your notions on these questions?

The final thing I would like to ask in this letter is this: We do not have a cafeteria of any sort, but rather vending machines. It does no good to memorize what is in them (or even the prices for that matter) because they change each day. Is it unreasonable to ask a sighted person what is in them, or should I bring my lunch some of the time as I have been doing?

I will be waiting for an answer. Please don't feel you have to hurry with it. I

know you are very busy. So just answer me when you have some free time to do it.

STATE OF IOWA,
COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND,
Des Moines, Iowa.

DEAR —: I was pleased to hear from you, and I do not at all consider your questions silly or trivial. Let me deal with your second question first.

You tell me that items change daily in the vending machines in your lunchroom, and you ask whether I think it is alright for you to inquire of a sighted person what is in the vending machine or whether you should bring your lunch from home. By all means, inquire of a sighted neighbor. It does not inconvenience the neighbor, and it does not cause him any problem or use up very much of his time. It is the sort of thing any normal reasonable person will be glad to tell you and think nothing of it.

As I have often observed, independence does not mean that if one wants new clothes, he must raise the sheep, shear the sheep, spin wool into thread, weave it into cloth, and cut and sew the garments. This sort of procedure is inefficient, and we left it behind in the dawn of civilization. Rather, independence means being productive enough to have something to exchange for the clothes which somebody else has made.

Of course, it also means not making a nuisance of yourself to those around you, and not asking others to do what you can easily do for yourself. It means, being considerate of others and finding things to do for them, as well as asking them to do

for you. This is (or, at least should be) the normal living pattern for everyone, not just the blind. Like others, the blind do not seek absolute independence. Rather we seek interdependence—not isolation but equality, not total self-sufficiency but parity of performance. Above all, we should not, on the one hand, be so touchy about letting others help us or, on the other hand, so helpless and incapable (or just plain lazy) that we are intolerable.

Now, let me deal with your other question. You were to have a test. I gather that you would normally have taken it after class. You had another engagement. You did not wish to cancel the other engagement, nor did you wish to request a postponement of the test to a later time. You suggested that your teacher let you take the test in Braille. Your teacher declined, asking you instead to give the answers aloud in the presence of the class.

In the first place I wonder whether you state the problem correctly. Did you know the test was coming? If so, was it really not convenient or practical to change the engagement, or never make it at all? Assuming that such was not possible, why should the teacher permit you to write your answers in Braille—unless, that is, she reads Braille herself? Except when it is necessary, your teacher should not be inconvenienced so that you can be inconvenienced. If she wanted you to give the answers in class, I think she should have this option since she altered the usual procedure to suit your wishes and since you had the alternative of taking the test after class.

Moreover, there might have been other alternatives. For instance, I do not know what method you would have used to take

the test after class. Perhaps the teacher would have read it to you. Would she have been willing for you to type it or dictate it to a reader in a nearby room while the others were taking it? Are there other techniques which you might have thought of to use? For example, would the teacher have dictated the questions on cassette at the beginning of the class?

In any case I think you should see the whole matter in perspective. You should be flexible and not overly sensitive. Good temper and a spirit of give and take are in order. A willingness to endure some inconvenience to make things easy for the

teacher will likely lead to a reciprocal attitude on her part. It will be a happy situation all around.

I think your letter shows insight and maturity. The questions are certainly not silly or trivial. Instead, they point toward inquiry and growth. I was pleased to hear from you and hope that things are going well.

Cordially,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
Director,
Iowa Commission for the Blind.

□

FROM THE ARCHIVES:

THE NEUROTIC BLIND AND THE NEUROTIC SIGHTED— TWIN PSYCHOLOGICAL FALLACIES

AN ADDRESS BY
JACOBUS tenBROEK
DELIVERED AT THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 17, 1951

Long and significant strides have been taken by the Nation's blind in the eleven years since the first Convention of the National Federation of the Blind. Through successive advances in public assistance and social welfare, by improvements in vocational guidance and placement, and with increasing gains in economic opportunity and cultural participation, the blind are moving steadily closer to the ultimate goal of full and equal membership in American society. A very great deal, of course, remains to be done; and it may be well to remind ourselves, on this anniversary, of the several dominant features of the Federation program with

which we are today most actively and immediately concerned.

Perhaps first, in any listing of the ends to which our organization is pledged, is the goal of Understanding—which, in negative terms, means nothing less than the total eradication of the ancient stereotype of the "helpless blind man," that age-old equation of disability with inability which remains today, as ever, the real affliction of blindness. Second, and closely dependent upon the first, is the assertion of our Normality: the elementary truth that the blind are ordinary people, and more exactly that they are *persons* unique

individuals each with his own particular as well as his general human needs. Third, among our objectives is Security, representing a normal human striving which is only accentuated—not transformed—by the fact of blindness, and to which the programs of public assistance are especially addressed. But Security remains a static and even a stultifying concept without the further element of Opportunity, which is the fourth of our objectives: opportunity to participate and to develop, to become useful and productive citizens. Fifth in line (but not in importance) is the goal of Equality, which is both a precedent and a product of all the rest: equality which flows from the sense of belonging, from the frank acceptance of the community, and which entails equal treatment under the law, equal opportunity to employment, and equal rights within society. Sixth is the objective of Education: education of the blind in terms of social adjustment and vocational rehabilitation; and education of the sighted—parents, teachers, employers, and the community—in terms of the several goals already mentioned. Seventh and last is the platform of adequate Legislation, permanent safeguards based on rational and systematic evaluation of our needs and erasing once and for all the restrictive barriers of legal discrimination and institutionalized ignorance.

These are only the most general and conspicuous of the goals to which we are committed. Within each area, of course, there are concrete problems and particular emphases. In public assistance, for example, the overriding need is to secure adequate protection while actively encouraging the efforts of recipients to surmount the relief rolls by way of self-sufficiency; and in the field of rehabilitation, the objective is to improve

the services of training and placement while retaining administration with those qualified to understand the distinct needs and problems of the sightless. On every level the accent varies; but when all parts work together in harmony under skilled direction, they express the underlying theme of Integration—social, psychological, and economic. And the dominant note that emerges is one of hope; for if it is true that we are a long way still from equal partnership with the sighted in the continuing experiment of democracy, it is also true that by contrast with our status only eleven years ago we are a long way toward it.

In this brief summation of goals and achievements, there is however an implicit assumption which is so generally taken for granted that it is only rarely recognized. The assumption is that the blind are fit to participate in society on a basis of equality; that there is nothing inherent in their handicap, or invariable in their psychology, which renders them incapable of successful adjustment and adaptation to their society. And the corollary of this assumption is that there is nothing fixed or immutable about the obstacles encountered by the blind in their progress toward integration; that social attitudes and opinions are essentially on our side, and that where they appear otherwise they are based on ignorance and error and can be changed.

These are large assumptions; and they carry an immense responsibility. For upon them rests the entire structure of social programming and welfare services to which this organization is dedicated. But suppose, for a moment, that these assumptions are false. Suppose that the blind are not just ordinary people with a physical handicap, but psychological cripples; and suppose,

further, that the complex of attitudes and beliefs about the blind entertained by the general public are at bottom completely hostile and immune to change. If these suppositions should somehow receive scientific sanction—or even if they should become widely accepted among the public and among the blind—it is easy to see that the consequences for programs of education, assistance, rehabilitation, and employment (to name only the most conspicuous) would be profoundly different from those we now pursue. The long campaign to integrate the blind into society on a basis of equality would have to be discarded as naive and utopian; the effort to enlighten public opinion and to erase its gross discriminations would have to be abandoned as illusory and futile. The blind would become again, as they have been so often in the past, a caste apart, a pariah class; and our efforts on their behalf would be reduced to the administration of palliatives designed to make their social prison as comfortable as possible—but not to help them escape.

To all this it may be replied that there is after all no danger of such reactionary suppositions gaining credence in informed circles; that the weight of scientific and theoretical opinion is altogether on the other side. And so in fact it has appeared; as recently as last year's Convention I should have agreed wholeheartedly with this belief. Today, however, I am compelled to announce that this confidence is no longer justified. For the suppositions I have outlined are precisely those avowed and put forward by two recent writings that lay serious claim to scientific status: one of which asserts that the conditions of blindness invariably impose a neurotic personality structure—a psychological crippling; and the other of

which declares that social attitudes toward the blind are fundamentally a sublimation (a deflection) of aggressive instinctual drives, carrying an inescapable undercurrent of hostility. The first of these may be called the thesis of the "neurotic blind"; the second, the thesis of the "neurotic public."

What is most surprising about these theories, at first glance, is that they are the work of two outstanding individuals who are themselves blind, and whose sympathetic and generous contributions in the field have earned distinguished reputations for both. One of these gentlemen, Dr. Thomas Cutsforth, is a prominent psychologist and authority on problems of the blind, whose classic work *The Blind in School and Society*, published over fifteen years ago, has been credited with greatly modernizing the fundamental concepts of the psychology of blindness. The other, Mr. Hector Chevigny, is the author of two notable books on blindness, besides being a reputable historian and a skilled professional writer. About the complete integrity and considerable ability of both these men there can be no question; but about the truth and value of their respective theories there can be and there is a very large question indeed.

The first of the two views—as expressed by Dr. Cutsforth in a symposium on blindness published last year¹—maintains that the response to blindness under modern conditions results invariably in a pattern of behavior indistinguishable from that of neurotics. To his credit, Dr. Cutsforth does not say, as so many psychologists have said in the past, that it is the physical defect which created the disturbance; rather he says, what amounts to much the same thing, that the

conditions imposed by blindness make such personality distortion inevitable. The blind person, we are told, comes to evaluate himself as society in its ignorance evaluates him; and as a result he soon feels inferior and alone. In his effort to regain both self-respect and social esteem, he reacts in either of two ways—and two ways only—the way of “compulsive” compensation, or the way of “hysterical” withdrawal. Both responses, according to Cutsforth, are “fundamentally neurotic”—which means, among other things, that they hinder rather than assist the individual to adjust to his handicap and to society.

Such terms as “compulsive” and “hysterical,” of course, plainly beg the question; they are neurotic by definition. Most of us, however, would probably agree that the ostrich reaction of withdrawing from reality and retreating into infantile dependence is no solution to the problem of adjustment; but the author's attitude toward the familiar adjustive mechanism known as “compensation” is less easily accepted. We shall say more about compensation later on; for the moment it is enough to point out that even the psychoanalyst Alfred Adler, whose rigid theory of “organ inferiority” made neurosis a virtually inevitable accompaniment of physical handicap, nevertheless maintained that the defect could be overcome and complete adjustment achieved through compensatory activity.² Not so, however, Dr. Cutsforth. “In following this pattern [of compensation],” he asserts, “the individual . . . develops along the lines of the compulsive personality. . . . Therapeutic or educational emphasis upon compulsive symptoms leads in the dangerous direction of creating lopsided personalities, monstrosities, or geniuses as

the case may be. . . compensations are as much evidence of personality pathology as the less approved and more baffling hysterical reactions.”³

Clearly, there is little hope for the blind person within the terms of this analysis. He is committed to behaving either compulsively or hysterically—and both ways are equally neurotic. What is more, any attempt to combine the two mechanisms only makes matters worse. Nor is there much hope to be derived from clinical treatment of this “blind neurotic”; for “it is obvious,” says Cutsforth, “that any therapeutic program for the adjustment of the blind personality that concerns itself only with the correction of either or both of these personality malformations is doomed to failure.”⁴ Since these malformations are the only ones allowed, it is a bit difficult to know what else a therapeutic program might be concerned with. But it may be supposed that what the author has in mind is a broader program aimed at the modification of unsympathetic social attitudes, which are admitted to lie at the root of what he calls “the neurosis involved in blindness.” This is, however, very far from his purpose. Observing that “until recently the blind and those interested in them have insisted that society revise and modify its attitude toward this specific group,” he continues: “Obviously, for many reasons, this is an impossibility, and effort spent on such a program is as futile as spitting into the wind.”⁵ Only two of the “many reasons,” evidently the most clinching, are vouchsafed to us. The first is that “society has formulated its emotional attitudes not toward blindness itself, but toward the reaction pattern of the blind toward themselves and their own condition.”⁶ But since the reaction of the blind to their own

condition has already been defined as a reflection of social attitudes, this amounts to saying that the social attitudes are formed in terms of something which itself is formed by social attitudes—a neat bit of circular reasoning which avoids coming out anywhere. The second reason advanced against this “spitting into the wind”—that is, trying to change social attitudes—should be of particular interest to members of the National Federation of the Blind: “. . . it is extremely doubtful,” claims Dr. Cutsforth, “whether the degree of emotional maturity and social adaptability of the blind would long support and sustain any social change of attitude, if it were possible to achieve it.”⁷ And finally, he declares: “It is dodging the issue to place the responsibility on the unbelieving and non-receptive popular attitudes.” “The only true answer lies in the unfortunate circumstance that the blind share with other neurotics the nonaggressive personality and the inability to participate fully in society.”⁸

The implications of this extremist theory for the broad field of social programming are not difficult to make out. In its assignment of the primary responsibility for maladjustment to the blind individual alone, it discourages attention to the home and community environment in which character is formed and personality develops; and, even more specifically, in its emphasis on the immutability of social attitudes, it disparages all attempts to modify or revise them as futile and even dangerous. Indeed, Dr. Cutsforth labels as “hypocritical distortions” all efforts to, as he puts it, “propagandize society with the rational concept that the blind are normal individuals without vision.”⁹ If the blind are not normal, there is obviously little point in attempting to educate or prepare them for a normal life. If they are

compulsive and hysterics, far from seeking equal treatment and full participation in society they should be content with the exiled status of the misfit and the deranged. There is no need to spell out in specific terms the numerous ways in which this verdict would operate to undermine the progress of the blind toward equality and integration. The only one of our programs which might in some sense survive its test is that of public assistance—but it would be an assistance shorn of opportunity and bereft of dignity, an empty charity without faith and without hope. The Cutsforth thesis of the “neurotic blind,” in short, would seem to rule out any and all solutions to the problems of rehabilitation and adjustment other than that of prolonged psychotherapeutic treatment on the individual level—and even here, as we have seen, it is not at all clear what there is to be treated.

Fortunately, there is an answer—a scientific answer—to this defeatist theory. But before turning to that it is necessary to consider the other recent theory which by implication supports the reactionary suppositions we have outlined: namely, Hector Chevigny’s thesis of the “neurotic public.” (This viewpoint, as set forth in a book called *The Adjustment of the Blind*,¹⁰ is the joint property of Chevigny and his co-author, Sydell Braverman; but because he is the senior author and because his name is most widely associated with the ideas in the book, we shall refer to the formulation as Chevigny’s.) Observing that the emotion which is most commonly encountered in attitudes toward the blind is that of pity, Chevigny subjects the “pity concept” to a psychoanalytic examination along the lines of classical Freudian theory, coming to the conclusion that pity “derives

from an original cruelty impulse through either sublimation or reaction formation."¹¹ This original impulse is variously and ambiguously defined as fear, guilt and sadism; but the implication is plain throughout that expressions of pity always represent a deflection of deep-seated feelings of hostility. Chevigny next attempts to distinguish between pity and kindness, maintaining that kindness has a "different origin in the psyche" and represents beneficent rather than hostile feelings. Curiously, however, kindness itself is later conceded to be "a sublimation of the aggression toward one another present in all children, [and] it may also be the end product of a less sound defense system against the same drives."¹² In short, kindness, like pity, is essentially a sublimation of aggressive drives; from which it would appear that the distinction between the two emotions, if any, is one of degree rather than kind. Far from distinguishing pity from kindness, Chevigny has succeeded only in making the point that all attitudes toward the blind, however apparently well-meaning, are founded on a subterranean rock of antipathy and aggression.

The inconsistency of this psychoanalysis of attitudes becomes understandable when it is seen as a particular instance of the paradox inherent in the whole system of Freudian instinctivism: the paradox that, as Freud himself expressed it, "the things of highest value to human culture are intelligible as a consequence of frustrated instincts."¹³ The most virtuous emotions—love and affection, toleration, sympathy, and compassion—all are explainable in terms of the sublimation of innate aggressive drives; even the sense of justice, as Erich Fromm has pointed out, was traced by Freud to the envy of the child

for any one who possesses more than he.¹⁴ Freud's psychological determinism does not consist however, as popular writers often suppose, in the reduction of all behavior to the sex drive, but rather in the conception of a dialectical struggle between the forces representative of life and death—a struggle underlying all human history, individual and cultural. "The tendency to aggression," he insisted, "is an innate, independent, instinctual disposition in man and . . . constitutes the most powerful obstacle to culture."¹⁵ But if the existence of culture depends on the suppression of natural instincts—if, as Freud put it, "the core of our being consists of wishes that are unattainable, yet cannot be checked"¹⁶—then cultural equilibrium is at best precarious, if not foredoomed to destruction. Indeed Freud came to wonder whether civilization might not be leading to "the extinction of mankind, since it encroaches on the sexual function in more than one way . . ."¹⁷ "As he saw it," observes a prominent modern psychoanalyst, "man is doomed to dissatisfaction whichever way he turns. He cannot live out satisfactorily his primitive instinctual drives without wrecking himself and civilization. He cannot be happy alone or with others. He has but the alternative of suffering himself or making others suffer."¹⁸ Short of destruction of the species, then, the conflict of man and society must remain forever unresolved. Whenever the inhibiting social forces are for a moment relaxed, we see "men as savage beasts to whom the thought of sparing their own kind is alien."¹⁹ But on the other hand, whenever the inhibitions become too severe, or the frustrated instincts pile up against the blocks—as periodically they must—then, says Freud, the organized explosion known as war becomes inevitable. "A period of general

unleashing of man's animal nature must appear, wear itself out, and peace is once more restored."²⁰

So much for the Freudian theory of instincts, and the extreme cultural pessimism to which it gives rise. It is relevant to our present purpose insofar as it illuminates the consequences for social programming which might be expected to follow its application to the psychology of social attitudes. For if Chevigny is correct, and all social attitudes toward the blind, antagonistic or benevolent, are explainable as the consequence of frustrated instincts, then by Freudian standards two conclusions may be said to follow: First, that the services and programs based upon these attitudes, like all cultural products, are achieved only at the cost of general neurosis, and are therefore unhealthy and precarious; and second, that the submerged hostile feelings toward the blind must periodically erupt over the barriers in outbreaks of persecution and aggression. It would seem evident that this thesis—the thesis of the “neurotic public”—affords little hope of any rational and sustained progress in the social welfare of the blind; at least until such time as the general population may be induced to undergo extended psychoanalytic therapy. In the face of universal hostility, however well-disguised, there can be no serious thought of achieving recognition and integration; and the solution to the problems of the blind must perforce be sought in the reinforcement, rather than the removal, of the medieval barriers of isolation and segregation.

It may however be flatly stated that the Chevigny thesis of the “neurotic public” is not widely entertained by serious students. The validity of its Freudian assumptions

has been sharply and effectively challenged by major developments over the past ten years within psychology and the social sciences—most notably, perhaps, in the sphere of the cultural anthropologists. An impressive number of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts as well, concluding that man's biological nature need not condemn him to conflict with society, declare that in fact anxiety and conflict are largely the product of institutions which, being man-made, are subject to alteration. In the words of Harry Stack Sullivan, the present social order operates destructively on human beings, “not only as it sets limits within which the patient's inter-personal relations may succeed,” but “as the source from which spring his problems, which are themselves signs of difficulties in the social order.”²¹ The relevant conclusions for our purpose is that the personality problems of the blind may not be placed at the door of their defect or even of their personal frustration, but rather have their focus in the arena of social relations and institutions. Again, in rejecting the theory of innate aggressive propensities, these post-Freudian social scientists interpret attitudes of genuine affection, sympathy and compassion as the healthy expressions of natural human attributes. It may be suggested that, according to this modern formulation, the concept of “adjustment” as extended to the blind would signify not their conformity to immutable outer circumstance but rather the adjustment and arrangement of social conditions and attitudes in closer harmony with the established physical needs of the blind.

With this we return to the Cutsforth thesis of the “neurotic blind”—the thesis that denies the possibility of altering social attitudes and places the blame for maladjustment squarely upon the blind.

Nothing would be gained, of course, by rejecting these contentions on "moral" or sentimental grounds. They make their claim on a scientific basis: the only relevant test is whether they are sustained by the scientific evidence. And it may at once be said that the main contentions of the Cutsforth theory are not supported by the available data compiled by research psychologists and social scientists. His claim that inner responses to blindness are reducible to the two mechanisms of compulsive compensation and hysterical withdrawal is questionable on several counts. Hans von Hentig²² has pointed out that the loose habit of referring to "aggression" and "withdrawal" as the main reactions to disability "is of course a simplification. There are many intermediate responses." And he notes especially, what many in today's gathering have long since discovered for themselves, that "there is a matter-of-fact attitude, taking the handicap as it is, [like] poverty, hunger, bad luck and neglect, making no fun of the handicap, yet not stressing it by trying vainly and painfully to disregard the infirmity." Another observer, Vita Stein Sommers, discovered after intensive study of blind adolescents that her subjects "displayed a variety of adjustive behavior. Some showed mechanism of adjustment which served to reduce emotional strain and tension, and contributed to a solution of their mental conflicts. No apparent harm to their personality development was indicated."²³ Sommers found no less than five major types of response to blindness; and, in direct refutation of Dr. Cutsforth, she concluded that the most satisfactory was that of compensation. "The cases," she writes, "support the belief of many psychologists that compensation is the most healthful form of adjustment, frequently resulting in superior forms of

accomplishment."²⁴ This conclusion coincides with the conviction of those psychologists influenced by the teachings of Adler, who himself maintained that "by courage and training, disabilities may be so compensated that they even become great abilities. When correctly encountered a disability becomes a stimulus that impels toward a higher achievement."²⁵ A recent survey of research in the field of disability has reported that the Adlerians "find that both compensatory behavior and inferior attitudes do occur in physically disabled persons, but that they are by no means of universal occurrence. Some investigators," the report continues, "question whether these symptoms are any more frequent than in the general population."²⁶ From all of this it may be concluded, in reference to the Cutsforth thesis, not only that there appear many other responses to blindness than those of compensation and withdrawal, but that compensation itself—an ambiguous and little-understood phenomenon—has generally the appearance of a positive and adjustive, rather than a neurotic, form of behavior.

As to the claim that the conditions imposed by blindness necessarily lead to personality disturbance, the available evidence points strongly in the opposite direction. One European psychologist who has devoted particular attention to the problem of physical impairment declares that "even the most serious physical disability does not necessarily result in a distorted personality. Although there are often factors in the environment of the crippled person which tend to produce distortion, *other factors operate at the same time to lessen the probability of its occurrence.*"²⁷ Again, a wartime study based on the neuropsychiatric examination of 150 blinded soldiers found that

"emotional disturbances do not always or necessarily occur and that the soldier of sound personality structure, free from pre-existing neurotic or psychopathic traits, is fully capable of making an adequate emotional adjustment to his disability providing adequate orientation and rehabilitation facilities are available. The authors further conclude that blindness, as a mental stress, does not appear to be capable, by itself, of producing abnormal mental or emotional reactions."²⁸

Dr. Cutsforth's assertion that "it is dodging the issue to place the blame on social attitudes," and that these are somehow out of bounds to investigators, receives even shorter shrift from the findings of research psychologists and social scientists working with the handicapped. Instead there is general agreement that, in the words of Lee Myerson, "the problem of adjustment to physical disability is as much or more a problem of the non-handicapped majority as it is of the disabled minority";²⁹ and, unlike Dr. Cutsforth, the data uniformly indicates the practicability, as well as the need, of changing the attitudes of parents, teachers, employers, and the community generally. Some students, such as Roger Barker, emphasize the similarity between the "minority status" of the blind and that of racial and religious subgroups, and suggest that the solutions found to problems of prejudice in general—through such means as education, psychology, propaganda, learning and politics—may be equally applicable to the physically handicapped.³⁰ An opinion area of primary importance, of course, is the home environment. Sommers, among others, asserts that "parental attitudes and actions constitute the most significant factors in setting the fundamental habit patterns of

the blind child."; but, since parents themselves reflect the attitudes of the community, she concludes that "our main concern in dealing with the problems of personality development in such an individual must be an effort to shape the reactions of his environment.... The training of the handicapped and the education of those with whom he is most closely associated and of society at large must take place simultaneously."³¹ Her concluding words are especially worthy of quotation: "The ultimate results will depend on the extent to which the home, the school, the community, and society at large coordinate and direct their efforts toward giving [the blind child] sympathetic understanding but not undue pity, encouraging independence and initiative, and helping him to achieve success and happiness as a contributing member of the family group and as an adult member of society."³²

In summary, it may be said that this view of the relation of blindness to personality development, espoused by the great majority of research psychologists and workers with the blind, denies that any single personality pattern is invariably associated with blindness, holding rather that individual responses depend primarily upon such variable, and modifiable, factors in the environment as the attitudes of parents and the community. The practical implications of this more "optimistic" explanation lie definitely in the direction of encouraging the modification of public attitudes and relationships toward the blind, and of fostering programs directed toward the greater all-around participation of the blind in society. The great objective of public understanding—first among our seven organizational goals—emerges in the light of this empirical evidence as not only

necessary but eminently practicable; and along with it the erasure of false stereotypes and the establishment of our normality. The various specific programs of education and legislation, of rehabilitation and social security, are similarly supported by these findings as indispensable means toward achievement of the ends we have set for ourselves--the ends of full equality, of unlimited opportunity and of total integration.

This, then, is the scientific evidence that underlies the growing structure of programs and services supported by the National Federation of the Blind. It is this evidence that finally gives the lie to the antique notions of inferiority and incapability which have surrounded the blind from earliest times. And it is this evidence that effectively refutes the reactionary thesis of the "neurotic blind" and its corollary of the "neurotic public"; for it asserts that there is nothing in the psychology of the blind which miscasts them for the role of equal partners with the sighted, and that there is nothing in the psychology of the sighted which prevents their recognition of this demand. It would of course be premature--as in scientific matters it is always premature--to claim either that present knowledge is complete, or that the achievement of integration will follow automatically from its publication. But it is not too much or too soon to declare, with all the conviction at our command, that the blind are capable of fulfilling the equalitarian destiny they have assigned themselves--and that society is capable of welcoming them.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Blindness: Modern Approaches to the Unseen Environment*, Paul A. Zahl, ed. (Princeton University Press, 1950)
2. See Rudolf A. Dreikurs, "The Social-Psychological Dynamics of Physical Disability." *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (1948), p. 42
3. *Op. cit. supra* note 1, pp. 176-177
4. *Id.* at p. 176
5. *Id.* at p. 179
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Id.* at p. 183
9. *Id.* at p. 179
10. Hector Chevigny and Sydel Braverman, *The Adjustment of the Blind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950)
11. *Id.* at p. 148
12. *Id.* at p. 149
13. Quoted in Joseph Jastrow, *Freud: His Dream and Sex Theories* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1932), p. 290
14. Erich Fromm *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Norton Co., 1941), p. 294
15. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (London: Hogarth Press, 1946), p. 102
16. Quoted in Jastrow, *op. cit. supra* note 13, p. 290
17. Quoted in Franz Alexander, *Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton Co., 1948) p. 323

18. Karen Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth* (New York: Norton Co., 1950), p. 377
 19. Freud, *op. cit. supra* note 15, p. 86
 20. Clara Thompson, *Psychoanalysis: Its Evolution and Development* (New York: Hermitage, 1950), p. 140
 21. H. S. Sullivan, *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (Washington, D.C.: William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation, 1947), p. 87
 22. Hans von Hentig, "Physical Disability, Mental Conflict and Social Crisis," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (1948), p. 27
 23. Vita Stein Sommers, *The Influence of Parental Attitudes And Social Environment on the Personality Development of The Adolescent Blind* (New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1944). p. 65
 24. *Ibid.*
 25. Alfred Adler, *Problems of Neurosis* (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Company, 1930), p. 44
 26. R. G. Barker, Beatrice A. Wright, and Mollie Gonick, "Adjustment to Physical Handicap and Illness" (New York: Social Science Research Council, *Bulletin* 55, 1946), p. 84
 27. *Id.* at p. 85
 28. B. L. Diamond and A. Ross, "Emotional Adjustment of Newly Blinded Soldiers," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, (1945), vol. 102, pp. 367-371
 29. Lee Myerson, "Physical Disability as a Social Psychological Problem," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 4, No. 4, (1948), p. 6
 30. Roger G. Barker, "The Social Psychology of Physical Disability," *Id.* at p. 31
 31. Sommers, *op. cit. supra* note 23 p. 104. See also Stella E. Plants, "Blind People are Individuals," *The Family*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (March, 1943), pp. 8, 16
 32. Sommers, *Id.* at p. 106 □
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ALABAMA CONVENTION

BY

T. EUCLID RAINS, Sr.

The annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Alabama was held at the Holiday Inn Motel in Birmingham on March 23, 1974. The Magic City Chapter of NFBA hosted the event. Delegates and members of four NFBA chapters were present for the occasion.

State President Beatrice Teal brought the morning session to order at 10:00 a.m. After Joe Horsley gave the invocation Charley Johnson led the group in a spirited singing of the Battle Hymn of NFB. Next came the welcoming address by John Ed Holstun.

Chapter presidents gave reports on the activities of their members during the past year. Joe Horsley reported the Magic City Chapter had sponsored a booth at the State Fair exhibiting blind-made products and distributing NFB literature to the public. Miles Raines reported the Racing City Chapter in Talladega had recently had a fruitful membership drive and had taped a panel discussion on the NFB which was aired on a Talladega radio station. Elva Yokley announced that the Lake Guntersville Chapter of NFBA was the first in the State to launch a fundraising project in 1974. T. Euclid Rains, Sr., told of the Sand Mountain Chapter's present and future plans for *The Alabama Bulletin Board*—the NFBA newsletter.

Evelyn Parker, from the Birmingham Social Security office, explained the SSI program as it relates to the blind. She then stood for a rollicking question-and-answer session afterwards. The highlight of Mrs.

Parker's appearance at the meeting came when she introduced John Obrian, a blind employee of the Birmingham Social Security staff.

The head of the Subregional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Birmingham, Ron Countryman, said that the Birmingham branch of this program opened with three hundred users and one thousand titles. The library now has six hundred users and the selection has grown to four thousand titles. At present there are subregional libraries in Huntsville, Anniston, Montgomery, Dothan, and Mobile. "Hopefully," Mr. Countryman said, "this service will soon be extended to the blind and physically handicapped in the areas of Tuscaloosa and Florence."

James Omvig and Ralph Sanders represented the National Office of NFB at the Alabama convention. Mr. Omvig, Assistant Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind in charge of Orientation, was the main speaker at the day session. He brought hearty greetings and congratulations from NFB President, Kenneth Jernigan. He conveyed President Jernigan's regrets that a previously arranged commitment prevented his being with us at the Alabama convention. The theme of Mr. Omvig's address was "What the NFB Is." He recounted several of NFB's court cases that have resulted in the breaking down of the barriers of discrimination against the blind.

"Knowing the facts," Mr. Omvig said, "only a foolish man would say that there is

no discrimination against the blind citizens of this country. But the real problem of blindness," he stated, "is the negative attitude of society. There is a real need for the organization of the blind. As Dr. Jernigan says, 'animals in the jungle hunt in packs—surely we, the blind, have as much intelligence.'"

In the afternoon session E. U. Parker, president of the NFB of Mississippi, described the process by which the workers in the sheltered workshop for the blind in Mississippi had their earnings raised to the minimum wage level. Parker, a successful businessman himself, says, "If you're going to make money in a sheltered workshop, you're going to have to manage it like a business."

As it should have been, the banquet was the crowning feature of the NFBA convention. It was well attended. Anderson Frazer, president of the NFB of Georgia, was with us at the banquet and during all the convention as well. The Reverend John Drawhorn gave the invocation. The Honorable George Seibels, Mayor of Birmingham, extended a most cordial welcome to all the out-of-town conventioners and visitors. He reassured all present of his sincere interest in the programs and general well-being of the blind citizens of Birmingham and throughout the State. Mayor Seibels told of the many architectural barriers for the physically handicapped that have come down during his administration. In closing he pledged continued assistance to the blind of Birmingham and the State.

Plaques of appreciation were awarded to Sam Hutton and Mrs. Guy Orr for outstanding service rendered in the betterment of conditions and standards in the lives of blind Alabamians.

The drawing for the door prizes during the convention was ably handled by Katherine Bonner and Mrs. Joe Horsley.

Ralph Sanders, president of the NFB of Arkansas and a member of the Executive Committee of NFB, delivered the banquet address. The text of Sanders' address was "What you in Alabama can do for NFB and what NFB can do for you." He emphasized the worth and importance of each member to his chapter—to the state affiliate—and to the national organization. "Whatever concerns NFB as a whole," Sanders said, "concerns each NFB member individually."

Beatrice Teal, Burlie K. Dutton and the other members of the Magic City Chapter are to be commended for putting together such a splendid convention.

This 1974 NFBA convention was both an end and a beginning. It was an end to the doubts that some have expressed heretofore that the NFB would never come back in Alabama. It was truly the beginning of a new brand of resolution—some may soon be spelling it with a "v"—among the organized blind of Alabama. I have sensed a deep undercurrent of independence and determination—especially among the younger members of this organization—which seems to be communicating this message to all: "We may be blind and we may be poor but we are going to change things for the blind where we pass."

I wager that this generation of blind citizens is not going to be satisfied to be rehabilitated to third- or fourth-class post office or courthouse concession stands or to sheltered workshops, or to be sentenced to second-class citizenship without a desperate struggle at the barricades. □

ARKANSAS CONVENTION

The National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas held its annual convention on November 30 and December 1, 1973, at the Downtown Holiday Inn in Little Rock.

The convention began on Friday night, November 30, with an open meeting of the board of directors and various committees. The big event began on Saturday morning, December 1, at 9:00. In attendance at the board meeting were NFB First Vice-President Don Capps and his wife, Betty. We were delighted to welcome Mr. and Mrs. James Sims who made the trip with the Capps.

At this time, Ralph Sanders, president of the NFBA, introduced our distinguished guest Don Capps, representing the national office. Mr. Capps talked about NAC and the outcome of the October trip to Washington.

Several resolutions were discussed and adopted by the group. They included a resolution calling on the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services for the Blind to discontinue its efforts toward accreditation by NAC. Another dedicated the resources of NFBA to establishing a volunteer taping and Braille-transcribing program.

A panel discussion was held on the topic of employment opportunities for blind persons. The panelists included Bill Lively, director of the Lighthouse for the Blind in Little Rock; Jim Edwards, Area Rehab Supervisor for Pulaski County; Bill Eder, Deputy Attorney General; and Mary McHammond, representative of the State Employment Security Division. The panel was chaired by Jim Hudson who was recently appointed to the Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, representing the NFBA.

Mr. Ferguson, from the Social Security office in Little Rock, talked at some length about Supplemental Security Income. Mr. Ferguson discussed several changes in assistance payments and programs with the federalization which became effective January 1.

There were two new board members elected this year: Searcy Ewell, second vice-president, and Jim Hudson, second board position, both of Little Rock. Those who were reelected were Ralph Sanders, president; Ordis Higgs, first vice-president; Bruce Higgs, secretary; Dick Freeling, treasurer; and Leslie McDaniel, third board position. Continuing in office are board members Diane Durham and Alpha Ennis.

Mrs. Cleotta Mullen, Librarian of the Regional Library for the Blind in Little Rock, and Mrs. Mertus Jones, Librarian at the Arkansas School for the Blind in Little Rock were panelists on the subject of library services for blind persons. Mrs. Mullen discussed the Regional Library for the future. Among the things she mentioned was the possibility of having tape duplicating equipment installed. Mrs. Jones discussed her library at the school with regard to its increasing capacity of availability of books for young readers.

The festivities for the banquet began at 7:30 p.m. with a meal fit for a king. Searcy Ewell hosted the occasion with many jokes and got a lot of laughs. The evening speaker was Mr. Capps who talked about the organized blind in general and our own great movement. Door prizes were given away throughout the day. □

HAWAII CONVENTION

BY

DON THOMSON

On March 30, the Hawaii Federation of the Blind held its 1974 convention at the Princess Kaiulani Hotel, near Waikiki Beach in Honolulu. The convention facilities were superb and we all had a great time.

The Saturday morning session opened with remarks by our national representative, James Gashel, Chief of the Washington Office of the National Federation of the Blind. Jim told us of the work going on in Washington, and brought us up to date on legislation concerning the blind. He called upon all of our members to write letters on the Disability Insurance for the Blind bill and on the issue of NAC. He emphasized the need for grass-roots action and for teamwork with the Washington Office in order to get our legislation adopted by the national Congress.

A very informative presentation was made by a representative of the Social Security Administration, concerning the new program of Supplemental Security Income. Many of our members asked questions and expressed a desire for further discussions at a future chapter meeting.

Two other panels, one on services to blind students on the university campus, and one on adjustment to blindness, were also an important part of the program. A well-attended noon luncheon continued our meeting in a more informal and very satisfying manner. The featured speaker at the luncheon was Neil Abercrombie, instructor of sociology and American studies, candidate for the State House of Representatives, and a member of the

Hawaii Federation of the Blind. Neil gave an excellent presentation and called on all of us to heighten our activity in the pursuit of the goals of the organized blind of Hawaii and the Nation.

This year's banquet was also well attended and spirited. One hundred and two Federationists and their friends jammed the banquet hall to hear Jim Gashel deliver a ringing denunciation of some of the thinking in work with the blind, and give a thorough review of the contrasting positive views of the National Federation of the Blind. He ended with a call to the barricades, and we all renewed our dedication to stand for what we know is right. Attending this year's banquet as guests were a representative of the Governor, the Mayor of Honolulu, four State legislators, a representative of the president of the State Senate, candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor, and many other friends of the Hawaii Federation of the Blind. The "Eva H. Smyth Award" (given to a deserving person in honor of significant contributions to the work of the organization) was once again awarded this year. Previous recipients are: Dr. Floyd Matson, former Representative Howard Miaki, Albert Au Young, and Representative Richard Wong. This year's recipient was Amelia Citrone, our treasurer and a very hard worker in the cause.

Throughout the convention we were privileged to have as our guests two California blind students—Michael Hingson and Rob Turner. Both participated fully in all phases of the convention and added

much to our discussions. Anthony Mannino, president of the National Federation of the Blind of California, was kind enough to send us two fine California representatives and some of us hope to be attending California conventions in the future as we have in the past.

During this convention, at least two issues seemed to crystalize. First, blind students continue to be controlled and overprotected by the Kukua Center at the University of Hawaii. More and more there is discontent on the part of the blind. It was clear that the day is soon coming when such second-class treatment of blind students at the State University must come to an end. A second issue concerned library services for the blind in Hawaii. Recently, library services for the blind of this State have taken an ominous turn—the Library for the Blind has now become the Library for the Handicapped. The blind are no longer mentioned, and it was clear from the convention discussions, as well as from previous action, that we will continue to

fight this submerging of our status. The blind of Hawaii and the Nation must maintain their identity.

Officers and board members elected at this convention were: president, Don Thomson; vice-president, Norman Ota; recording secretary, Curtis Chong; corresponding secretary, Jo Peters; treasurer, Amelia Citrone; and board members, Floyd Matson, Albert Au Young, Gordon Lau, and Clarence Eina. Delegate to the National Federation of the Blind Convention in Chicago will be Don Thomson, and the alternate is Norman Ota.

As we packed our bags and departed from the Princess Kaiulani Hotel, there was a real feeling of spirit and uplift. The 1974 convention of the Hawaii Federation of the Blind has been our most successful and we can look forward to many more. The organization is growing and it is beginning to center on some crucial issues concerning the blind. We are going to stand and we are going to fight. □

OREGON CONVENTION

BY

LOREN SCHMITT

The fourth annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Oregon was held in Salem, the Oregon State capital, on March 22-24, 1974. From its beginning Friday evening until its conclusion Sunday noon, our largest-ever convention dealt with a wide range of issues and actions. At the banquet our first scholarship winner, Diane Crussek, a blind student majoring in education, was introduced and was presented a scholarship for \$300. Scholarships for blind college students are made on the basis of

achievement and need. Completing the banquet was the thought-provoking speech by Kenneth Hopkins, representing our National Office. His presence and participation was an important part of our successful convention. The convention also marked the end of a successful State raffle. Winning tickets were drawn and announced at our banquet.

Earlier Saturday we learned of the trip to Washington, D.C., by Loren Schmitt, Winona Parker, and Glen Muilenberg, to

persuade Congressman Ullman to support our Social Security Disability Insurance for the Blind legislation. Congressman Ullman is the second-ranking Democrat on the House of Representative Ways and Means Committee and in the absence of Congressman Mills, serves as its chairman. As a ranking committeeman, Congressman Ullman serves on the Joint Senate-House Conference Committee, where our legislation is for the moment. Congressman Ullman supports our legislation and will work to bring it out for passage this year. Not letting any opportunity pass them by, our members contacted as many as possible of the Oregon congressional delegation, seeking additional support for our SSDI for the Blind bill and to assist in our efforts to reform or destroy NAC. The convention, acting on these matters, pledged every effort to obtain support for our SSDI for the Blind bill and resolved to work harder than ever to reform NAC or bring about its early demise.

In addressing ourselves to State issues, reports were received from Robert Pogorelc, Administrator of the Oregon Commission for the Blind, regarding the progress of the agency overall; Robert Gough, Director, Oregon Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (an orientation and adjustment center) regarding its activities; and Charles Young, Director, Portland Training Center for the Blind (an evaluation center) regarding its activities. These reports generated a good deal of discussion of ways to improve services to the blind of Oregon. We resolved to seek legislation changing the composition of the Commission board from nine members to five members. Currently five of the nine members are administrators of other programs with vested interests. In fact, one of the board positions is held by an

administrator with whom the Commission negotiates directly for Federal funds. So, we are seeking a five-member lay board. In addition, the convention instructed the officers to meet with the Commission Administrator and staff to explore the future role of the evaluation center and the effectiveness and significance of psychological and psychiatric testing.

The activities of the Oregon Sight Conservation Committee, Inc., were reported to us by its chairman. Services and assistance available from Social Security offices under the SSDI and SSI programs were explained by Mr. Harris. Last, but not least, the report of the State Library on services for the blind and physically handicapped as presented by Wayne Enck was of interest to all.

This being an election year, on Saturday we elected Winona Parker, of Portland, president; Jeff Brown, first vice-president; Glen Muilenberg, second vice-president; Loren Schmitt, secretary; and Randy Parker, treasurer; board members Mary Reid and George Newberry. Our executive committee is completed by Mike Burwell and Ben Prows, whose terms expire next year. In addition to a lively contingent from Idaho, Sue and John Ammeter from the Washington affiliate attended our convention. Sue reported upon the activities of the Washington affiliate and proposed that a bus to the national Convention be shared by Washington and Oregon. The response would indicate that we will have our largest contingent ever at a national Convention.

As a final item of business, Ben Prows was selected as an alternate delegate to the

national Convention in Chicago. Our president serves as our official delegate. The executive committee will determine the site for next year's State convention.

Along with all the hard work, the hospitality room was open and busy Friday

and Saturday nights and all in all a good time was had. Sunday, after the close of the convention, our president, Winona Parker, held a press conference with the Salem press corps to report upon our convention and discuss our programs and activities. □

TENNESSEE CONVENTION

BY

LEV WILLIAMS

The sixth annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee was held March 9 and 10 at the Downtowner Motor Inn in Nashville. Those attending agree that this was one of our more successful conventions with somewhat more than one hundred Federationists on hand for the sessions.

Saturday morning the convention opened with a presidential report which brought the membership up to date on the year's progress and accomplishments. Emphasis was given to the need for continued organizing and rededication to the goals and objectives of the NFB.

Elaine Parker, Director of Tennessee Services for the Blind, reviewed the past progress of the agency and discussed its present efforts to implement Public Law 93-112 (the Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments of 1973). With her on the program were a number of new staff members of the agency. Mrs. Parker and other staff members repeatedly emphasized their desire to work in a partnership with the blind of our State.

The noon recess was also a busy time for many of the members, and especially those on the executive committee. The executive

committee luncheon featured a continuing discussion of ways in which we, as organized blind people, can work to support and strengthen the programs of the Tennessee Services for the Blind and the Tennessee school for blind children. Mrs. Parker, Director of the State agency, Clay Coble, Superintendent of the Tennessee School for the Blind, and Anthony Cobb, Assistant Superintendent of the Tennessee School for the Blind, were luncheon guests.

The Saturday afternoon session opened with a lively discussion dealing with the State vending stand program. Many of the blind vendors in the group registered real discontent with the present status and operation of the program and expressed the hope that improvements could be made in the near future.

A brief status report on the Tennessee School for the Blind was given by its Superintendent, Clay Coble. All of us were very pleased with the fact that Mr. Coble and Mr. Cobb, his assistant, attended the entire convention and took an active part in all sessions. The feeling was expressed more than once, that this is a good first step to ironing out any past differences between the blind and the agencies which serve them.

James Gashel, Chief of the Washington Office of the NFB, represented the National Office at this year's NFB of Tennessee convention. During the Saturday afternoon session, he spoke to us on the subject of national legislation. This was an important part of the convention, since Jim brought us up to date on the status of legislation in the national Congress. He urged all of us to write letters concerning the Disability Insurance for the Blind bill and he called for more pressure from the grass-roots level on NAC. On both issues, he said, we can win if we have the strength and the drive to do the job.

Beyond a doubt, the evening banquet was our most successful one yet. Somewhat more than one hundred Federationists and their friends attended. Certainly, the highlight of any NFB convention is the major address delivered at the banquet. Mr. Gashel was our speaker, and many of us will long remember what he had to say. His message challenged us to work harder for the goals and objectives of the National Federation of the Blind. Another highlight of this occasion was the presentation of the "Federationist of the Year" award. This year, Roger Ammonds, a blind person who works as a counselor at Tennessee State University, was the recipient. Roger has truly earned this important award for his fine work on behalf of all of us during the past year.

On Sunday morning, the fast pace and high spirit continued as Congressman Richard Fulton of Nashville talked with us and listened to our concerns in work with the blind. The Congressman was very gracious in taking time off from a cerebral palsy telethon. As evidence of our appreciation for his appearance at our

convention, \$55 was collected and donated to this worthy project. Congressman Fulton is a real friend of all handicapped people. Among other things, he promised to consider hiring a blind person as a member of his staff, and the Congressman was true to his word. On May 1, a blind Tennessean, who is also black, will start to work in Congressman Fulton's Washington office. This event alone made the convention worthwhile. Congressman Fulton is a real friend of the blind.

As the convention drew to a close on Sunday morning, plans were made for the future. A number of resolutions were passed concerning continued progress of the State agency and the hoped-for move by the Tennessee School for the Blind to revoke its accreditation by NAC. Mrs. Parker, Director of the State Services for the Blind, told the group in no uncertain terms that her agency would not seek NAC accreditation, but that it would respond to the blind themselves.

Plans were also made for an active fundraising campaign, using the Ludwig candy as the sale item. There was much talk of the upcoming NFB Convention in Chicago. We promised a large delegation from Tennessee.

Newly elected or reelected officers are as follows: president, Lev Williams, recently appointed area specialist for the visually handicapped in the Special Education Division of the Memphis public schools; first vice-president, Roger Ammonds, counselor at Tennessee State University, Nashville; second vice-president, Mrs. Ralph Mobly, homemaker and member of the Memphis Progressive Guild for the Blind; secretary, Lillie Christmas, State employee,

Nashville; treasurer, Lois Cole, teacher, Tennessee School for the Blind. Board members elected were Bill Thompson, Memphis Progressive Guild for the Blind; Elbert Haynes, manpower specialist, Community Action Program of Memphis; and Billy Cole, vending stand operator, Nashville. Lev Williams was elected to serve as delegate to the national Convention. Gertie Wisdom was elected to serve as alternate delegate.

As the convention came to a close, shortly after noon on Sunday, March 10, the feeling was expressed by those attending that this convention was a giant step ahead for the blind of Tennessee. Many of us will be attending the National Federation of the Blind Convention in Chicago in July. We hope to see you all there. We, in Tennessee, are much encouraged with our present progress, and what is more important, we have plans for the future. □

VIRGINIA CONVENTION

BY

MARION McDONALD

The National Federation of the Blind of Virginia held its sixteenth annual convention at the Quality Inn Governor in Falls Church, on March 22, 23, and 24. The accommodations and meeting facilities were excellent, and a good crowd was on hand to enjoy the best convention yet. Over 140 Federationists and their friends registered and we were proud to have eight guests from the NFB of the District of Columbia and twenty-six guests from the NFB of Maryland.

Friday evening started off the convention with festive hospitality, complete with a small band for listening and dancing. Many of us had an opportunity to renew old acquaintances and meet new friends. Also, many availed themselves of the opportunity to register and to purchase NFB jewelry.

One of the highlights of any state convention of the National Federation of the Blind is the report from the National Office. This year, John Taylor attended our convention and assisted us in a variety of ways. John brought us up to date on some

issues concerning Supplemental Security Income for the blind, on NAC, and on other important issues facing the Federation nationally. He urged us to have a large delegation on hand at the 1974 national Convention in Chicago, the first week of July.

Another highlight of the Saturday convention program was a presentation by Frank Kurt Cylke, Chief of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress. From his remarks it was clear that a new day has dawned at the Library. Mr. Cylke was genuinely interested in hearing from us and responding to our questions and suggestions. In fact, he stayed around to talk with many of us and attended the banquet. As he talked with us, Mr. Cylke expressed the desire to work with the blind toward the goal of expanding library service.

Other reports concerned national and State legislation. James Gashel, newly appointed Chief of the NFB Washington Office, brought our members up to date on

the activities in the Nation's Capitol. He urged us to write letters concerning the passage of the Disability Insurance for the Blind bill now pending. He also emphasized a need to continue our efforts to reform NAC. He said that Congress must hear from the blind. On the State level, Jimmy Nelson reported on the activities of his legislative committee during the year. For the most part, the committee has been attempting to secure legislation to establish a separate school for blind children, to secure representation on the board of the State Commission for the Blind and to convince the Commission of the wisdom of revoking its NAC accreditation. Progress was reported on all issues, but much remains to be done.

This year's banquet was truly a highpoint for all of us. Many outstanding prizes were awarded. The banquet hall was literally filled wall-to-wall as 163 Federationists attended, making this our largest banquet yet. John Taylor, representing the National Office of the Federation, gave a moving banquet address. He reviewed our past history as a State organization and drew upon many of his personal experiences in helping us get started sixteen years ago. His remarks caused many of us to give thought to our role in the Federation, and to rededicate ourselves to the goals of strengthening our activities on the State and on the national level.

The Sunday morning session featured other interesting items on the program. Arlene Gashel moderated a panel on employment for the blind. Panelists were: Norma Jo Shore, psychiatric social worker; Carl H. Schmitt, electrical engineer; and Mary Thompson, a foster-care mother. This was an excellent panel and sparked a lively question-and-answer period.

Walt Weber presented an outstanding report on the NFB of Virginia Federal Credit Union. Organized last September,

our credit union now has more than sixty shareholders with approximately \$4,500 in assets. Six loans have been made and things are going well. Nancy Hoover of Harrisonburg has been appointed as credit union treasurer, a post which requires much work and skill. Nancy is equal to the task.

This year, two new chapters were welcomed into the growing NFBV family. Ray Houghtaling, president of the Augusta Federation of the Blind, accepted the charter presented at the Saturday evening banquet; Mary Collins, president of the Tri-City Federation of the Blind, accepted for her organization. This brings the affiliate to a grand total of nine chapters in Virginia.

Officers elected at this Convention were: president, Walt Weber, Richmond; first vice-president, Alan Schlank, Arlington; second vice-president, Robert McDonald, Alexandria; corresponding secretary, Gwen Welle, Richmond; recording secretary, Nancy Hoover, Harrisonburg; and treasurer, Marion McDonald, Alexandria. Each chapter in the NFB of Virginia will elect one member to serve on the board of directors for the coming year. Walt Weber was elected as delegate to attend the National Federation of the Blind Convention in Chicago and Alan Schlank was elected as alternate delegate.

As the time drew near for the close of the convention, counts were taken of those planning to attend the Convention in Chicago. Virginia will have a fine delegation on hand and we hope to see many from across the country. Next year, our State convention will be hosted by the Richmond Area Federation of the Blind. The following year, the Piedmont Chapter will host our convention. Hats off to the Potomac Federation of the Blind for hosting our best convention yet! □

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

SUBMITTED BY
MAE GREEN

Editor's Note.—Miss Green is a member of the Des Moines Chapter, NFB, and a member of the staff of the Library of the Iowa Commission for the Blind.

NFB BEAN SALAD

Ingredients

1 one-pound can cut green beans	½ cup oil
1 one-pound can red kidney beans	⅓ cup red wine vinegar
1 one-pound can garbanzo beans	½ cup Burgundy or claret wine
1 eight-ounce can pitted ripe olives	½ cup granulated sugar
1 red onion, thinly sliced	¼ teaspoon basil
½ cup minced green pepper	¼ teaspoon garlic powder

Method

Drain beans and olives, and combine with onion and green pepper. Combine remaining ingredients and pour over bean mixture. Cover, and refrigerate several hours or overnight. □

MONITOR MINIATURES

The NFB of Massachusetts will host a testimonial dinner May 25 for John Nagle, who recently retired from his post as Chief of the NFB Washington Office. The dinner, to be held at the Highpoint Inn, in Chicopee, Massachusetts, will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a reception line and end with dancing. Both Massachusetts Senators and all twelve Congressmen have been invited, and a large number of Federationists are expected to pay tribute to John for his many years of dedicated service to the interests of the organized blind in the Nation's Capital.

On July 1, 1974, the monthly fee for part B of medicare goes to \$6.70 a month (from the present \$6.30) for more than 22 million Americans covered by this health insurance plan. The reason given by Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of HEW, is an increase in doctors' bills and other fees. There is no assurance at this time that there will be any increase in the benefits under medicare since the Congress is still wrestling with some sort of health security act.

Ray Dinsmore, for many years a member of the NFB Executive Committee, has been in bad health recently. He has undergone major surgery three times in the last two years and faces it again. In accepting Ray's resignation from some committee appointments, President Jernigan wrote: "No one has worked longer or made greater contributions or believed more deeply than you. I hope that your health will improve and that you will soon again be as vigorous and active as ever. You have helped make the Federation what it is, and your voice will always be heard in its councils. Keep me informed of your progress, and make a speedy recovery. We need you on the front lines."

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Public Law 93-203, signed in December 1973, is known as the "Job Training and Community Services Act of 1973." The purpose is to establish a flexible and decentralized system of state and local programs providing job training opportunities and community services for economically disadvantaged, unemployed, and under-employed persons. One of the provisions would provide counseling, education, orientation, and on-the-job training to prepare the individual for work or to qualify for more productive job opportunities, with allowances for training, transportation, subsistence, or other expenses incurred while participating in job training programs. It will serve those who have particularly poor employment prospects because of age or physical condition.

* * * * *

Tony Mannino, president of the NFB of California, has a wonderful sister named

Mary. Over the past many years the Editor of *The Monitor* and Mary have engaged in a good-natured but continuing argument, he maintaining that she needs to buy a new car and she stoutly insisting that her present car of ancient vintage is okay. Actually, the car does run well but the roof leaks mightily every time it rains. Well, recently Tony and Mary were staying at a plush hotel in Palm Springs. As they prepared to leave for Los Angeles, Mary couldn't find the car check to give to the parking attendant and the lot was filled with new Cadillacs and Lincoln Continentals. "Oh, that's all right, lady," the attendant assured Mary, "your's is the old car," and then declined the proffered tip. Well, that did it. The next thing we heard was that Mary was seen in a new car salesroom looking over the 1974 models.

* * * * *

Culver-Stockton College, in Canton, Missouri, announces a workshop in Rapid Braille Reading for the summer of 1974. The 1974 workshop will be held on the Culver-Stockton campus for a two-week period—August 5-16. Classes will meet during the morning hours only, leaving the afternoons and evenings for study, excursions, et cetera. The course is open to the blind, the partially sighted, and the sighted. Two semester hours of undergraduate credit may be earned.

It is expected that a workshop participant will at least double his present rate of reading. Speeds in excess of five hundred words per minute are not uncommon by the end of these two-week periods. The cost for the August workshop will be approximately \$235 per person. This will include tuition, board, room, and registration fee. Interested persons should

write to Dr. Vearl G. McBride, Culver-Stockton College, Canton, Missouri 63435.

* * * * *

According to preliminary figures released by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, twelve states have supplemented the Federal grants under the SSI program of \$140 a month for an individual and \$215 for a couple by establishing flat grants for those in independent living arrangements as follows:

STATE	INDIVIDUALS	COUPLES
Alabama	none	\$250
California	\$265	500
Delaware	150	248
Indiana	144	288
Iowa	148	213
Massachusetts	242	485
Missouri	165	(not available yet)
Nevada	215	430
Ohio	131	218
Oregon	163	235
South Carolina	none	220
Virginia	153	200

Apparently in the other thirty-eight states and the District of Columbia the Federal base payment is higher than the mandatory level for recipients without special needs and these states have elected not to supplement the Federal grant for blind persons. While the Federal SSI payment went from \$130 to \$140 for an individual and from \$195 to \$215 for a couple on January 1, 1974, this will not ordinarily increase the amount of the flat grant in these twelve states which have elected to supplement, the additional money merely reducing the amount the states have to pay in supplementation. The

increases in the SSI payments will, of course, help the recipients in those states which have not supplemented.

* * * * *

Elizabeth Bowen, president of the NFB of Florida, has received warm commendation from the Superintendent of Schools for the activity of the Jacksonville Chapter of the Florida affiliate in promoting the capabilities and opportunities for the advancement of blind individuals. The local Federation has been active in taping nine books for the visually impaired area of the exceptional student program.

* * * * *

A year-long investigation of vending operations on federally controlled property was recently completed by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of the Congress, and turned over to Senator Jennings Randolph, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on the Handicapped. Randolph ordered the investigation of Federal vending facilities in connection with his efforts to expand the blind vending stand program through revision of the Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936, which the West Virginia lawmaker authored.

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A new local chapter has joined the NFB of Arkansas. Membership for this new Bonanza Chapter will be drawn from a five-county region of West Central Arkansas that comprises the Bonanza Land Region of the State.

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The Committee on Labor and Public Welfare of the House of Representatives has approved a resolution calling on the White House to call a Conference on the Handicapped.

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Minetta Scott, president of the NFB of the Andovers (an affiliate of the NFB of Massachusetts), writes: "We are collecting broken Braille watches for Africa, India, and Pakistan. Workers in these countries fix the watches and they are given to blind people in these foreign lands. We would like anyone who has any of these to send them to Mr. Ormond Scott, 244 Maple Street, Middleton, Massachusetts 01949.

* * * * *

The R. L. Gillette Scholarship was established by the will of R. L. Gillette to provide supplementary funds for female students of music at the college level. The scholarship is offered by the American Foundation for the Blind with selection of candidates made by the Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped.

The scholarship candidate must be a female in, or planning for, a major in music or music education at the undergraduate level. She must be legally blind. She must be currently enrolled in, or an accepted applicant to, a college or university which provides a major in music or music education and which is accredited by a member of the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education (M.S.A., N.E.A., N.C.A., N.A., S.A., and W.A.). Finally, she must be able to demonstrate that she has financial needs above and beyond support available to her from other resources, especially the

vocational rehabilitation agency in the district, state, or territory of which she is a resident.

Application forms for the scholarships may be obtained from the Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped, 1604 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103. If you have any questions, write to Judith James, chairman, Scholarship Committee, at the above address. The deadline for applying is June 1.

* * * * *

The South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind, the NFB affiliate in that State, has developed an interesting and potentially valuable brochure concerning the making of wills and urging persons to remember the organization. Forms are also given which one's attorney may use in leaving a bequest. Other state affiliates might well emulate South Carolina by adapting a similar brochure to their own purposes. Copies may be secured by writing P.O. Box 4174, Columbia, South Carolina 29240. In using this brochure, the Aurora Club plans to work primarily with trust departments of various banks throughout the State, as well as some law firms.

* * * * *

CBS Radio has flooded the Editor with releases about its new show this season, the "CBS Radio Mystery Theater." The program is aired seven nights a week at 10:07 p.m. (9:07 Central Daylight Time; 8:07 Mountain Daylight Time), following the ten o'clock news. Hosted by E. G. Marshall, the show presents a newly written and produced, complete mystery suspense drama every night.

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Harry Frank recently published a book entitled *Introduction to Probability and Statistics: Concepts and Principles*. He dedicated his book to four of his former teachers, one of whom was the late Jacobus tenBroek. Recently Mr. Frank wrote Mrs. tenBroek as follows: "The dedication of this book is a very pale tribute to a man I respected immensely. I took only one class from him, and I was not even in his department, but the enormity of his presence and the discipline of his intellect were very significant in my life."

* * * * *

Gwen Rittgers of the Kansas City Chapter of the NFB of Missouri has come up with a novel idea to stimulate the miss-a-meal fund for the International Federation of the Blind. She arranged a party and the active participants performed, their numbers representing different countries: a piano number by Chopin representing Poland; a vocal solo in Spanish; a song in French; a greeting in Russian; a piano solo by Brahms, representing Germany; and a menu in Italian. Other chapters may give this format a thought in raising money for the IFB.

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The new president of the Las Cruces Chapter, NFB of New Mexico, writes to give us the new officers of the chapter, elected February 19. The president is Mary Ann Rind; vice-president, Richard Andazola; secretary, Ruth Barclay; and treasurer, Ventura Garcia.

* * * * *

Beacon Lodge Camp for the Blind occupies nearly six hundred acres along the

Juniata River in central Pennsylvania. Supported by the Lions Clubs of Pennsylvania, the camp has facilities for 172 blind children and adults. Guests take part in a program which includes swimming, arts and crafts, bowling, music, dancing, roller skating, nature hikes, field events, wrestling, bicycling, fishing, and overnight hikes. The camp's brochure also mentions programs of rehabilitation and personal adjustment. A majority of the campers receive some sort of scholarship to attend. For more information, write to Beacon Lodge Camp for the Blind, Box 222, Lewistown, Pennsylvania 17044.

* * * * *

Dr. Ham Walker, a blind chiropractor in Southern California, has been featured in a couple of newspapers recently because of his ability as a yachtsman. With his wife at the helm and their Great Dane as mascot, Ham Walker crews his thirty-one-foot yacht, the *Sea 'n' I*, alone. "Basically, I just know every inch of the boat," says Walker, "and I know where I am in relationship to everything else." The Walkers have competed in ten Newport-to-Ensenada races, the San Diego Handicap Fleet, and his club fleet.

* * * * *

The Indiana Council of the Blind has launched a newsletter, *The Watchword*. Its co-editors are Pat Maurer and Jean Wagner. Here are excerpts from the first issue of *The Watchword* which report some of the activities of our busy Indiana affiliate: "The NFB radio spots are now being distributed widely in our State, and have already increased our communication with blind people throughout Indiana. . . . The

NFB Christmas program was played on a large number of radio stations and has brought forth favorable comments from the public. . . .

"ICB had representation before a committee of the Federal Aviation Administration. The hearing was held to determine whether blind people should be excluded from specified flights on public air carriers. The hearing went well, as far as we could tell. We believe that the blind will not be excluded as air passengers.

"We were represented at hearings concerning a charge for the use of directory assistance. It appears that the blind will not be charged for using this service, as we are often required to do.

"The Indiana Council of the Blind had representatives in Washington and New York City working on our Disability Insurance for the Blind bill and against the National Accreditation Council. We believe we were reasonably successful in both ventures. . . .

"Presidential letters are sent out to the presidents of all local chapters on a weekly basis. These letters will keep the chapters up to date on our progress with disability insurance and our progress in defeating NAC, as well as other matters of concern to blind Hoosiers."

Congratulations are due the editors of this new newsletter, and to the members of the affiliate who provided the news. Indiana is clearly on the move. □

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